

折原臨也と、

夕焼けを

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Prologue A: Your Neighborhood Informant

“Really, I have the chance to kill him, right?”

The one who was saying such absurd words on the phone was a salary-like man wearing a worn out business shirt.

[Yes, for certain he will remain in the company office alone. There is no mistake on the password cord for the safe. I guarantee it.]

“Is that so.....I don’t get it why he would be at the company during break when even security isn’t there, but that’s fine.”

[I’m making sure, but will you really do it? Murder.]

The man replied back in anger towards the voice on the other side of the cell phone.

“Of course I will! What are you saying now?! We shared both good times and bad when we launched the company. And he completely discarded me, a joint manager! He’s monopolizing all the research results to himself!”

[Now look, there are people with personal information. Why not give up on revenge and begin to walk on a new path?]

“There’s no way! He was my best friend.....No, I was supposed to be his friend! But I was just a stepping stone to him! Everything was taken from me! I have a family to support.....Even though I still had debt.....Even though he knew that! I’d only be left out in the cold with my family! This time it’s my turn to steal everything from him. Right!”

The man continued to raise his voice as though to persuade himself. Perhaps he wanted an agreement from the person on the other side of the phone.

[This killing intent is just] he said.

[I think even if you don’t choose another job you’d still be able to support your family though. Well, even so, if you say that then I’ll respect it. No matter what end you’ll meet with.]

“That’s none of your business! When I succeed I’ll give you half the pay! You better run far away the best you can!”

The man sternly yelled and cut the call having nothing else to say.

The question 'will you really do it?' repeated in his head numerous times.

– Damn that informant. Right until the end he weakens my determination.....

After slapping his cheeks, the man set his resolve from the sharp pain.

This is a just revenge, he says to cheer himself up-he concealed the knife into his pocket and took a step out into the night.

Believing that step would be the first step towards his new life.

"Damn.....why.....why did it get like this....."

Having finished with the *clean up* safely a few hours later, the man fell to his knees crestfallen behind the alleyway.

The spurt of blood stuck thickly to his business shirt, and fresh blood clung to the folded knife kept in his breast pocket.

"Aaah.....what will happen.....? Why.....would that"

The man shook his head, and the ringtone of his cell phone went off in his breast pocket. Without checking the screen, he answered the call with a hallow expression.

And then a pleasant voice unsuitable to the man's current situation came from the receiver.

[Hey, congratulations! Being able to answer the phone like this means you ended it without any problems and without having the tables turned on you!]

"Without.....problems, you say?"

After grinding his teeth, the man stated with a shaking voice.

"I.....in the safe.....there was hardly any money. Instead....there was the title certificate of the company under my nameA.....a-, a-a-, after I killed him, when I looked at his laptop he had been writing his indictment to the company....."

[Yeah, that would be about right.]

"Ha.....?"

[He remained at the company to write that today.]

The man on the other side of the call laughed at the dumbfounded man.

[The president, realizing the large scale injustice the company's workers were doing, tried to protect you, his joint manager. You, his best friend.]

“.....?”

[Thinking of your personality, he probably thought if he told you of the illegal activities you would try to take responsibility together. But on top of you having a family and unavoidable debt he couldn't let you be burdened by it. Wouldn't the president have thought that? So you two had a splitting up and then he pretended to have stolen the rights for management. Once fired, it would have made it unrelated to the company.]

Indeed, there was a confession like statement written for the media on the laptop: 'Before the illegal activities are made public, I discarded my joint manager who had the possibility of noticing.'

[Seems he already wrote instructions. It seems after the settlement finished, the company's stock and benefits from the research results would automatically have become yours.]

“That's a lie!”

[If you saw the inside of the safe then you should already know that this isn't a lie, right?]

The man inquired with chattering teeth harder than before to the voice saying that simply.

“You.....knew.....this? On top of knowing everything, you didn't try to stop me!?”

[You say some rather strange accusations. Didn't I just try to stop you not too long ago? If you like, shall I have you listen to the recording?]

“You're.....you're screw-.....”

[The one who is screwing around is you, isn't it?]

The person on the other end distinctly stated with the force to interrupt his

yelling.

[I'm an informant. If you had even asked, I would have told you everything I knew. I normally wouldn't have given a warning, but this time I even gave a special hint with 'there are people with personal information.'"]

"That's....."

[You refused to understand him on your own.]

"Th-There's no way I could know! For something like that.....! How was I supposed to know?! Wouldn't he be at fault for not even saying one word to me?!"

Suppressing the nauseous feeling rising up from his back, the man screamed like a child.

A clear sneer could be heard from the cellphone.

[No way. Wouldn't the president also not expect you, his best friend, to resent him enough to think of murder? Well, you didn't read his movements of what he was doing behind the scenes.....or actually, with you not even trying to do that, it seems the president was the only one to have thought you were friends.]

"I.....That's wrong! That's a liiiiiiiieeeeeee!"

[Don't be so pessimistic. Didn't I say? No matter what end you'll meet with, I would respect your decision.]

[I think the action you took was very human like, you know?]

About the Same Time, A Certain Place in Kantou

He could hear the scream from the other side of the phone.

Immediately after the sound of a rough collision with something was heard and then the call completely cut off.

"Did he jump in front of a truck or something?"

The man who had the last conversation with the pitiful killer threw the cell phone he held into the trash.

"Now then, naturally when they get the cellphone the killer had they would

look into the call history.....so I guess it's about time to go to another city."

He whispered to himself as the sound of wheels moving resounded in the room. The man sitting in the wheelchair turned his gaze to the ten-odd cell phones laid out on the desk.

".....I lost quite a few. I have to replenish the cellphones I threw away as well then."

The man squared his shoulders and while looking outside of the window with a self-ridiculing smile he whispered.

"Really, rehabilitation (human observation) is such a pain."

He was an informant.

There was one man who calls himself that.

Leaving aside if he should be called "informant" as his occupation, it was only certain that he had the power to acquire a lot of information.

He was never on the side of justice.

But neither was he a subordinate of evil.

Save the weak, crush the strong.

Trample the weak, flatter the strong.

Counsel the good, criticize the bad.

Ridicule the losers, rebuke the victors.

On one hand he lived like that; he would happily do the opposite too.

Save the strong, crush the weak.

Trample the strong, flatter the weak.

Counsel the bad, criticize the good.

Ridicule the victors, rebuke the losers.

It does not mean himself.

It was only that he is fair.

To his own desires, he was only honest about it.

“Humans.”

For the mass of gems enveloped in such a word, he earnestly continued to love them.

He just loved humans.

No matter the result, even if the humans he loved broke.

The informant could equally love a broken human.

Prologue B: Welcome to Bunokura

A three-lane prefectural road down-pouring with rain. On the pedestrian bridge of such a street, a banner reading ‘ahead is the mining town’ was hung. Under that banner getting soaked by the onslaught of rain, countless cars passed by.

There was a certain multi-tenant building downtown beside the road where there was not much traffic in terms of its width. On the roof top there was one man who symbolized the town getting pelted by the rain.

Ryuichi Adamura.

He was the head of the mine managing the town, the eldest son of Jingorou Adamura, and the man promised to inherit the Bunokura mine and all the benefits of attached to the company.

Silver, copper, lead, and zinc are extracted from the Bunokura mine in abundance, and while not as active as a working gold mine, it is continuing to extract even a small sum of money as a mine frequent enough. From its small ratio it is called a “silver mine” instead of a “gold mine.”

It was not just the mining though; it was also the attached business with the town revitalization accomplished by the Adamura family. It was said the total assets his family established was more than 15 billion yen.

Developing further assets, most of the town’s businesses were under the influence of the Adamura family making Bunokura, as it should be called the Adamura paradise, reign supreme in this region. The Adamura family was an existence that should be called even royalty in the limits of the town. Naturally with only 15 billion in assets it could not line up in the top ten of Japan, nor could it reach the level of standing to influence the country in comparison to big corporations. But if it was within the restriction of Bunokura that was another matter.

It was not just with money. If the base of personal connections developed over several decades was included it was possible to say that they have behaved like proper kings, if exclusive to just this town.

Although since they put too much investment into Bunokura if they took one step out of there their influence would weaken, and the Adamura group was not even a famous corporation with national constituencies either. If it was a person from the Tokyo area they would probably say, 'Adamura? Who's that?' They were like a big fish in a little pond.

Influential people around the town have discussed about that behind their back. But in exchange for the Adamuras being the 'big fish in the pond' they saved up large amounts of treasure they find and have chosen the path to become the king fish for themselves. Bouncing back against the ocean's waves and build up a sublime, tenacious pond. The name Adamura was deeply and strictly engraved into the minds of the people residing in the land Bunokura.

To remind them they were the rulers.

To remind them they were the protectors.

To remind them they were the dictators.

To make them believe they themselves were living in a pond bigger than the ocean.

Through such circumstances, in the twisted town in the local area a large family monopolizing the town was born.

The eldest son, the head of that family – Ryuichi Adamura, called the son of a noble. He was currently confined to the roof of the building his family owned.

– Why me.

– As if that kind of stupid thing would happen.

– Damn him.....I'll kill him!

– And not just a normal murder! I'll use plenty of money and time to kill him.

For half a day since he was confined, he yelled nothing but that. But accompanied by the starving feeling of his body, that abusive language steadily changed to that of anxiety.

– Why isn't anybody noticing? Damn it.

– Even though a full day has passed, what the hell is dad doing?

He was left alone in a store house beside the water reservoir tank on the roof, and as a result of three full days of being there he was exposed to starvation and pain from his bound limbs.

This was an Adamura coordinated leisure building. It was the greatest large leisure establishment in the city built as a part to the town revitalization with game centers, batting centers, bowling places, karaoke boxes and restaurants directed to young people.

Even though there were tons of people crowded on the lower levels, no one noticed him confined on the rooftop. He flung his legs around and yelled out for this being so unreasonable, but there was no reply.

“Y-you bastard! It’s enough! Just take these handcuffs off already!”

Noticing the one who appeared was the person that trapped him here, he cursed it again, but his voice already did not have much strength.

“If it’s money I’ll give you any amount you want! Okay? Hey! Let’s rethink this! How much did you receive from that Kiyojima bastard? This isn’t anything petty like doubling or tripling it. I’ll give you as much until you’re satisfied, so come here, okay? Tell him I died. Call that Kiyojima out here and.....”

The captor quietly approached Ryuichi, who was crying out for some kind of negotiation –

“__”

and whispered something into his ears.

At that moment, Ryuichi’s face paled even more so than before. For a moment the starving feeling and the pain in his limbs were blown away.

The moment he heard that whisper he knew. That he would certainly be killed.

“W-wait! Please wait! Let’s ta-.....gah”

Several thin papers were stuffed into his mouth when he tried to yell something.

Something like the tourist leaflets written with the same wording as the banner on the prefectoral road the Adamura group made for the city hall.

Although Ryuichi did not notice that.

Forever.

Something pierced into Ryuichi's face.

“_____”

The blade of the cutter knife thrust in breaking Ryuichi's nose but not to instantly kill him. The scream could not be made into words with the leaflets packed into his mouth, the sound caught in his throat becoming a groan and a bit of it resounded in the storehouse on the rooftop.

A rolled-up leaflet fell out from his mouth by the impact and fell to Ryuichi's side.

[Ahead is the mining town]

Blood splashed fell onto the characters written on the leaflet.

Slash, slash.

Instead of a pickax, the cutter knife pierced Ryuichi's body multiple times. It made the body violently writhe causing more leaflets to fall out to his side.

[Let's dig up your hopes]

Slash, slash.

Blood splashed on new characters. As though digging up something from the body wrapped in large amounts of flesh and greed.

[Let's refine the town's happiness]

Slash, slash.

The characters continued to be covered with blood, staining the leaflets in pure red.

Finally by the time the sound stopped most of the leaflet passages were unreadable –

But one phrase arose barely readable between the bloodstains.

[Welcome to Bunokura!]

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やってきた男



Chapter 1: The Man Who Came

*A Certain Month on a Certain Day, Extracted from a Portion of a Region
Newspaper Article*

[A body in Bunokura – determined as the missing eldest son of a wealthy family -]

[Last night the body found in Bunokura was identified to be Ryuichi Adamura (age 28) who had disappeared three days prior. The police are investigating from the case and accident -]

In a land from off from the town the newspaper article was written in.

In a small mountain hut one man gazed at the article. It was unclear how he obtained a regional newspaper from another prefecture, but the date was certainly today. The man smiled excitingly and threw the newspaper into the fireplace. And then he threw various pieces for games one would amuse themselves with on a table like chess and Shogi pieces, and Mahjong tiles and playing cards into the fireplace.

The season was the rainy season. Even on such a sodden, gloomy day he continued to light the flame in the fireplace.

The black-haired man watched the newspaper and game pieces turned into ash before he stroked the wheelchair left next to his rocking chair and took out his cell phone. Then making a certain call he happily begins to speak.

“I will accept what we talked about before. I will bring some people and come to the town.”

He used polite words, but it was in a tone with not much respect. Without ridicule, his words just contained a feeling of uneasiness like a child.

“.....Yes, this is not for your sake. It is nothing but for my own though.”

On top of the squeaking rocking chair the man gave a clear smile.

“It’s been a while.....I missed people. That’s all it is.”

After dropping the call, the man pondered to himself as he rocked the chair.

– Now then, who should I bring?

“Namie-san is in America, Kine-san and Mikage-san won’t leave Ikebukuro, Ran-kun is with the Awakusu group, Mamiya-san is annoying.....Fujiura-san is in prison, Neguro-san’s whereabouts in Germany are still unknown. Lisa-chan has come back to Japan, but.....to move for this case she’d stand out so let’s stop there.”

After listing off several names of acquaintances, the man smiled.

“Yep. That’s about right. First would be Sozoro-san.....and those two I guess.”

The moment he decided on the acquaintances he would summon, the man in the wheelchair thought over the journey ahead while humming.

“Ah, moving will take some time, so we have to do what we can so everyone doesn’t get bored.”

And then while watching the fireplace he let out a sigh as though he slightly regretted it.

“.....I wonder if it was a bit of a mistake to burn even the trump cards?”

A Few Days Later Bunokura

It rained in the town today too.

Under the sky covered in thick clouds, the darkened wall of the building stood like a gravestone. Even though it was supposed to be the best entertainment district in this land, the atmosphere surrounding the area was stagnant, and the bright voices seemed to have misrepresented that.

At the entrance to the entertainment district the man who had been splashed in muddy water by a car, Koshino, tutted in annoyance.

“Damn, seriously.”

He was an underling of a gang in the local area and walked with newcomers below his position. Looking at the mud splashed onto his pants he saw the car dash off, but it was already turning at the corner. Suppressing his irritation, Koshino slowly headed for the place of his destination.

It was on the fourth floor of an old building standing at the corner of the

entertainment district. The third floor had brothels, and the fourth floor had become a small office for black-market lending.

The organization Koshino belonged to—the Futsuku group was backing it, and it was one of the meager sources for funding.

“.....These are quite the numbers.”

Koshino who had looked at the unsubmitted books in the office made a plainly solemn face. Then a man from the same generation as him thought to be an entrepreneur of the illegal loaning said.

“With the current situation any more would be impossible. The number of guys closing the shop also increased.”

“Put in some more motivation. With not even a bit of money saved that rotten bonbon *sensei* will seriously take over the town.”

While having such a conversation the door to the office opened and a man showed his face.

“Hey, what’s wrong. Aren’t you making a pitiful face.”

“.....Sasazaki-san. Hello.”

While clicking his tongue in his mind, Koshino bowed his head without changing his expression.

“Is the Futsuku group also unable to win against the waves of the recession?”

“No, thanks to you, we managed to pull through.”

“Huh, is that so. If that’s the case, there’s nothing to hold back.”

As he said this the man called Sasazaki shoved out his hand as though expecting to accept something.

“.....”

After Koshino made a signal with a glance to the other, the entrepreneur of the black-market pulled out a thick envelope from a drawer. Sasazaki took that and after confirming the ten thousand yen stack of bill, he grinned.

“Aah, well then, I’ll borrow this.”

“.....Do the police have some plan on approaching the current case?”

“The current case? We have a lot, so which one?”

Feigning ignorance, the middle-aged man having taken the envelope shrugged his shoulders.

Sasazaki was an active detective.

Even if one could say he was active, he was a fellow hard-pressed to be called detective and was a person on the criminals' side giving out disclosed information instead of raising bribes from the town's black-market and brothels.

“It's the murder case with Adamura's child. Three days have gone by, but there has not been a follow-up report so I'm interested.”

“Hey now, don't say something so reckless. It may still be a suicide, you know? After all the victim had a weapon thought to be a cutter knife in his hand.”

“There is no way a suicide where a man with marks of restraints on his arms and legs would gouge out both his eyes by himself with leaflets stuffed in his mouth, cut off his nose and ears and then jump off the building would even happen.”

“Who knows. Maybe it was the drugs that did it? Confused, he cut himself while laughing and jumped from the building. Maybe such a witness testimony will come out?”

“I see, so from the start you had no intention of seriously investigating?”

The corrupt detective gave a bitter smile at Koshino's sigh.

“No? Outwardly I'm properly investigating into it. After all this time it's been rowdy in even the media.Well, we'll be investigating, but it'll die off once the excitement cools down a bit. The chief that came here half a year ago is naturally a kid of the career group. More than making a dispute against *sensei* or the *feudal lord* he'll keep to his principle quietly until his promotion.”

“In other words, the boss of the police will remain uninvolved in our meddling as usual?”

“As long as the media doesn’t make a fuss.”

Koshino also gave a bitter smile and spoke to himself at Sasazaki’s words.

“.....Really, even if I say it, just what is up with this town?”

Bunokura located on the land looking out onto the Japan sea could be said to be a fairly large town as a provincial city. But there were not many people who would happily migrate to the town.

The adjacent Hagane city was a city opened enough to tie sister city relations with tourist cities, but this town existing in a place separated by a mountain was filled with an enclosed atmosphere. But it did not necessarily mean it was a town in a recession.

Being a town developed by the exploitation of the mine, it had continued to prosper even now by the hands of a family monopolizing the few silver mines actively working in Japan. Recently there were movements to redevelop the city; the local born politicians having begun to take the lead and buying the land. But there seemed to be a large rift between the family that was the head of the silver mine and the politicians, so that friction had caused further discord in the deteriorated town.

The corrupt town.

Evading the nickname the neighbors had given it, a large half of the influential people in the town would butter up to the mine owner or the politicians and try to line their pockets with the corruption.

The one such person, the corrupt detective Sasazaki, said with a sarcastic smile.

“This town is already packed of gas from rotten people.”

“So you say, sir.”

“I’m still not rotten.”

– Naturally having to erase that much of a showy murder there is too much risk for us.

– It’d probably be better to save up money to get out of here already.

Sasazaki thought that in his mind, but not allowing himself to say anything about himself taking money under the table in front of Koshino he spit out deceiving words.

“Well anyway, you guys be careful to not set off any sparks. With this many bribes, I can’t cover for you.”

“We understand, sir Sasazaki. We don’t have the time to do reckless activities. We have to search for new clients instead of chasing those guys skipping town.”

The corrupt detective shook his head with a coarse smile to make a fool of Koshino.

“There won’t be any people coming to this town knowing the details now.”

A Few Minutes Later

Koshino opened the blinds of the window with his finger and looked down onto the street. At about that point, he watched the back of Sasazaki as he headed out of the building and walked through the city, clicking his tongue.

“Tch.....That shitty bastard. Just by saving a bit of money he feels like he could escape.”

“Shall we abduct him?”

Koshino frowned at the words of his delinquent subordinate.

“That would be creating reckless sparks. If that bastard betrays us that’s another story.”

Koshino tried to avert his gaze from Sasazaki’s back with a sigh, but then a strange sight caught his attention.

“.....What the hell?”

In front of Sasazaki stood two children, making him come to a halt, and were talking to him about something.

“.....Today is a weekday isn’t it?”

No matter how he looked at it they were a boy and girl about the same elementary school age where they could both be admitted to junior high at best. From this distance he could not make out their expressions, but he was

certain that they were children.

They were dressed neatly creating the impression that they were “wealthy children,” and they were presences completely unsuitable in the entertainment district lined with saloons, especially for noon.

“Sasazaki shouldn’t have a wife or kids though.....”

Ahead in his gaze as Koshino tilted his head to the side, Sasazaki was being pulled by the hand by the kids, heading off somewhere.

From the way Sasazaki walked, Koshino realized he himself was also perplexed.

“Just what is happening.....?”

He thought it was strange, but deciding those children had nothing to do with him he chose not to look into it further. From his experience of him living in Bunokura for thirty years, he knew full well.

That he would be better off than to recklessly poke his nose in matters where he did not belong in this town.

Inside Bunokura At the Hotel: “Bunokura Grand Palace” Royal Suite

“Ah, this is a good view.”

The man said as he looked over the rain covered town from up high. He was at the highest towering hotel in Bunokura, the “Bunokura Grand Palace.” The man who reserved the room on the highest floor entirely continued to gaze out of the side window of the suite room down onto the scenery of the town.

The man with glossy black hair was dressed in black clothes. And he was sitting down in a black based wheelchair. Unlike normal ones, it was a wheelchair with a strange, comfortable design that gave an impression of a reclining chair.

Crossing his legs lightly on the wheelchair, the man looked down on the city satisfied.

“I can sense the aroma of people just by looking. It’s a city entwined with a good feeling of violence and love. I like it.”

Chucking, the man continued speaking. With a happy smile across his whole face from the bottom of his heart.

“If it’s here, I think I can have a good time.”

The man moved his gaze to the side and addressed the bespectacled elderly man standing there.

“Don’t you think so? Sozoro-san.”

The elderly gentleman called Sozoro was dressed in a little bit of a different designed suit with black and white as the basis. From the sharp glint in his eyes reflected in his glasses and straightened back, he was a man who could be thought to be a kind of butler or bodyguard.

For a bodyguard that would be the most fitting impression for him, regardless of his old age.

“.....I do not think so. Unfortunately, I am a herbivorous man. This greedy air is difficult to breathe in.”

He used the “soregashi” first personal pronoun in a polite manner. Even though he seemed to be respectful he actually was not at all. Rather his voice contained an attitude that he was looking down on the man from somewhere, and the man in the wheelchair smiled heartily at the old man.

“You’re quite honest, Sozoro-san. Shouldn’t you pay your respects a bit more to me, your employer?”

“If you were not my employer, I would break that neck for the sake of the world.”

“You’re trying to be quite bloodthirsty, Sozoro-san.”

While smiling the man in the wheelchair moved its body forward. And then while gazing at the sky that had begun to turn darker than before he excitingly, excitingly whispered strange words.

“How exciting. Yeah, I’m really looking forward to it.”

“What kinds of sounds (humans) will play when this town is stirred up?”

The Restaurant “Kongonsaikan”

“.....You’re the one who called for me?”

In a high class Chinese restaurant on the highest floor of the Bunokura Grand Palace, Sasazaki spoke up cautiously. It was because of the strange children who had called out to him in the middle of town. He stood right here ,having been brought by them half-forcefully.

- “Hey, mister, you’re a detective right!”
- “.....Please come with us.”

After taking money under the table from the black-market lending company, he was suddenly called out by a young boy and girl as he was walking around town. He felt disturbed they knew he was a detective and tried to chase them off with a joke, “How about school? I’ll arrest you.” However –

- “Um, there’s a person who wants to bargain with you.”
- “It’d be best to follow.....probably.”

Being told of a bargain startled him, and he unconsciously looked around the area. He doubted it could be a trap, but at the present time he could not determine it for certain.

The children looked like they were about the same age, but they did not look like twins. Since they were a boy and a girl even if they were twins they would be fraternal twins, but based on that assumption they did not look quite alike. Not able to think of them as siblings, Sasazaki concluded they were probably not blood related.

While considering of the possibility of a trap. Sasazaki followed them while remaining cautious. If ahead of them was a warehouse or a dark alley he planned to immediately run away. Since there was the possibility of people who did not think well of him or criminals he arrested in the past whom would try to kill him. If it was a normal town he may not have been so cautious, but Sasazaki understood full well that Bunokura right now was a land that would overlook those kinds of occurrences.

But the place he was brought to was a prominent high quality restaurant in the city.

The moment he entered, Sasazaki froze up.

It was because the moment he stepped in well-built men in business suits in the shop wordlessly stared at him. It was not just one table. More than half of the tables occupied by these aggressive looking men were turned towards Sasazaki staring without a word.

– These guys.....who are they?

– Hey.....wait. I believe I'm resented by sensei and the feudal lord.....

Being kept an eye on by the two forces of the town, then would they try to kill me?

Sasazaki thought that, and while he was desperately thinking of an escape route he was pulled by the hand of the children. While considering at worst he could use the children as hostages. He was then brought into a room in the restaurant – a high class private room where people with black credit cards were guided to.

And there was one man.

“Hey, you’re Sasazaki-san, right? Nice to meet you. Let me introduce myself.”

Pointing to the business card left on the table, facing in front of Sasazaki made him freeze. He seemed to be a man without any of the businessman formalities.

[Financial Planner, Izaya Orihara]

His business card had that written on it, and after that only his cell phone number and e-mail address were given.

After seeing the name Izaya Orihara, Sasazaki observed him steadily.

He had glossy black hair and black clothes. There resided a clever shine in his eyes, and he had well-arranged face. No, more than cleverness it would be more correct to say sly. He had met face to face with murderers arrested in this town in the past, but he felt this man had the same look in his eyes. It was not that he felt a killing desire in them but with the simple meaning of “I cannot tell what he is thinking.”

If there was another unique quality to notice – the man was sitting in a

wheelchair. At some point the boy and girl who brought him here circled around behind him, and each one of them stood by while placing a hand on the wheelchair.

The man's complexion was good, so it did not look like he was seriously ill with something.

If that was the case, was he injured?

Sasazaki thought that and decided to try and ask him.

"You look healthy, but are your legs bad?"

"A while ago I got into a gaudy fight. If I tackle rehabilitation it seems I have the chance to heal, but according to the doctors half of it seems to be psychological."

While the man gave a bitter smile he stroked the wheel of the wheelchair.

"Well, it doesn't mean I cannot completely walk, but it's impossible to jump and move around. For example, if you try to kill me right now it'd be difficult for me to run away."

"I'll say this. Outside this private room there are a ton of people gathered."

He may certainly be able to strangle him here, but after that he would be killed. Besides he might be concealing at least a gun somewhere on his person.

".....Now then, what does a financial planner want from a detective like me?"

He said this, but Sasazaki did not believe from the start that he was a financial planner. He had judged it was clearly a fake occupation and thought his name was probably a false name as well.

Financial planners helped future plans for people's lives and companies included with assets, but from the man in front of him he did not feel the indication that he would think of others futures upfront.

And then the man in the wheelchair, Izaya Orihara, said while smiling cheerfully.

"Of course, it is about the future plans. For this town."

"Is that so.....Whose request? This isn't something of you thinking the future

of the town with a volunteer?"

"I cannot give a name, but I can only say an influential person in this town."

"....."

Hearing that, he came to read between the lines.

– I see, so he's someone from an organization employed by either sensei or the feudal lord.

– Which one? If I poorly back the wrong one I could already be targeted by the other party.

Thinking it would turn out bad for him, Sasazaki thought to try to not get involved with this man as best as he can, but –

Izaya threw over a thick envelope towards him.

".....?"

Sasazaki thoughtlessly took it, and after peeking from the opening he was shocked to see the roll of banknotes.

"H-hey, what is the meaning of this?"

"Really now. That's a bribe."

Izaya continued with a gentle smile.

"I can easily look up what you have at least been doing. Well, when I looked into the town under the assumption there are people who would do that, your name appeared.....As a result, you have been invited for a meal like this."

Sasazaki doubted for a while, but after confirming the roll of banknotes were more than fifty he prepared for the worst.

".....So, what do you want from this middle-aged detective with nothing ahead for him?"

"For one, with the envelope I just gave you I would like you to pretend to not see the scope of things no matter what I do in this town from here on out. The other one....."

With a wide smile Izaya took out another envelope.

From seeing the thickness of it, there seemed to be more money than the previous one.

“So I can carryout operations smoothly I would like to hear various topics from you who knows both sides of the town so well.”

“.....In other words, I answer you honestly, and I could receive the contents of that envelope?”

Izaya answered Sasazaki, who was swallowing hard, with a smile.

“Of course. Ah, there isn’t the punchline that the contents are actually just a newspaper or just a thousand yen bill or anything like that, so please be reassured.”

Showing the banknotes from inside the envelope slightly he flipped through the stack with his fingers.

Sasazaki started to sweat once he confirmed the total to be one million yen.

– This isn’t good.

– I don’t know between sensei and the feudal lord which side this kid is employed by, but if I poorly let information loose it seems I’ll be targeted by the opposite group.

Perhaps he noticed Sasazaki’s anxiety but Izaya started talking with a meek smile.

“Ah, I’m not saying to tell me some high class information here. I don’t mind even common knowledge of the human relations and organization charts of this town grasped even by slightly informed people. If you think it is inconvenient to you, then I’m alright with you intentionally hiding it on purpose. Although it’d be problematic if you just give nothing but lies.”

“.....Is it fine with just that?”

“Yes, no matter who employed me I just want objective information whether it be from opportunists or even better people in a neutral position. Starting from that is the basis of my subsidiary business after all.”

“And what would that be?”

“Ah, well more than subsidiary business it would be my principal occupation though.”

Izaya answered Sasazaki’s question while slightly changing his smile to a devious one.

“I am an informant.”

– Is he messing with me?

Sasazaki thought that.

There certainly existed individuals who were called informants. But it was a general term for those people who gave out information of a town for small coin, sometimes existing as bookmakers at race tracks or hostesses at bars. Thinking from the perspective of the police there were many information providers called “informants” in the ranks of gang organizations or cult religions.

He had not heard a man call himself an informant other than in dramas and manga. If someone looked into another person’s information then they could be called an investigator or part of a detective agency.

What is he doing taking the name of such a shady occupation for himself?

Sasazaki, thinking it was too childish for a simple joke, shook his head with a cynical smile.

“Ooh, that’s amazing. If that’s the case if I asked you the details of what I ate yesterday you would know.”

Izaya kept his smile the same and answered him while shrugging his shoulders.

“It was a brilliant dish of Tantanmen with black sesame seeds, right? You also asked for two helpings of kaedama.”

“.....”

Sasazaki felt the sweat forming on his palms.

– No, he just looked into me. He probably shadowed me for about a day.

So he thought and tried to keep is composure with a fake smile but –

“After the meal, you said some rather rude things to the new police chief at the Bunokura station, right? Hmm, wasn’t it, “I’m fine with turning a blind eye at what you are doing, but I’ll have you know when I’m around I’m not going to show my true self like an idiot.”

“.....!”

His smile froze at Izaya’s words.

- N-no way.
- Why does he know even that!?
- Was there anyone else there at that time!?
- Was he also there!? No way!
- Was it bugs!? The police!? No, a betrayer in the police force!?

Various possibilities came to mind and then vanished, but as though to wipe away the conjectures he made in his mind the text message ringtone of his cell phone went off. The content of the text was short with the subject line being “from the man in front of you.”

[How about you give me the names of the many patrons of yours in this town and the contents of the crimes they asked you to erase in person or through text?]

Seeing the written text Sasazaki comes to understand. That the man called an “informant” thrust in front of him a piece of information as free service.

The worst information – that the man in front of him already had a tight grip on his fate.

“Alright everyone, the shoot is done. Thank you very much.”

After Sasazaki left, Izaya came out of the private room in his wheelchair and called out to each person in the general seating. The well built men sitting there after looking at each other asked Izaya.

“It was Nakura-san, right? Is it really alright for one person each to receive 10,000 yen? We really only just took a seat and stared at every new customer that came in.”

“Yes, it was the best. That’s the kind of research this is.”

“Is that so? Well, we don’t really get it, but good luck.”

The people who were seated in the restaurant’s general seating were members of rooters and Rugby clubs at three universities out of town. They were employed by a man under the name of Nakura from one of the universities OB with “For praxeology research we are studying the human responses of when they are stared at suddenly by a large number of people,” and they continued to “stare at a visitor” in the shop being filmed on the hidden cameras.

While thinking it was a strange research, they were caught by the high daily wages and thus participated in this part-time job without questioning too deeply into it. Even the ones who doubted and did not participate in it naturally did not ask the university’s side to look into the OB’s registry. If there was someone who did they would have realized there was not a graduate by the name Nakura. Although they were deceived, they did not lose out and left with the earnings they easily received with a pleased expression.

After everyone left, the boy asked Izaya, who left the private room to make preparations.

“Hey, Izaya-san! Won’t the people of the store get mad for doing this?”

Izaya said back to the boy’s innocent question.

“Yeah, it’s alright. I properly asked the owner beforehand.”

“.....You threatened them.”

Izaya answered the girl who said that before she averted her gaze while shrugging his shoulders.

“No way. As if I would threaten humans. When I brought up the matter of them hiding the producing area of the meat they use, they just mistook it as they were getting threatened.”

“I don’t really get it.”

“.....”

The boy tilted his head to the side and the girl made an impatient sigh.

Hearing that from them, after Izaya drummed the arm of the wheelchair with his fingers he whispered half to himself.

“Well, perhaps they didn’t see through the misunderstanding.”

“Why?”

Placing a hand on the boy’s head who further tilted his head in confusion, Izaya cheerfully answered.

“I like that cowardice side of humans too.”

Izaya chuckled. His laugh felt like a kind of self-mockery from somewhere more than laughing at the cowardly humans.

“Humans don’t know when they will die, so they honestly have to live doing what they like.”

After saying such an odd statement, Izaya said as he began to roll the wheelchair forward.

“Yeah, but this place is a really nice city. It’s a good city. It’s overflowing with human qualities. Just from listening to Sasazaki-san it makes me want to stay in this city for a long time.”

Looking outside from the window the last time, Izaya lightly shrugged back his shoulders and sighed.

Happily, desolately.

“But because of just that.....This city may not live that long.”

Interlude: The Man Called Izaya Orihara ①

Izaya Orihara?

This is quite a nostalgic name to ask. Well, I guess it’s not that nostalgic. When I talk to friends and family, his name sometimes comes up in the conversation. Each time a dangerous or odd event happens it’s ‘what did Orihara-kun do?’ or ‘was the one behind the black curtain Orihara-kun?’ It’s that kind of topic.

You see, just from that you can tell he is a good-for-nothing kind of human

being, right?

What type of person is Izaya Orihara? Even if you say what type. In terms of occupation, he is an informant. Outwardly he calls himself a financial planner though.

An informant is an informant. He especially gathered a lot of information in regards to humans. Like the human relations in the city, someone's opposite side, or secret love relationships of famous people. If you ask him, he knows most of those sort of things. He sometimes knew the ordinary person's love relationships, but he looked into various topics for his hobby. He has also had times he investigated love affairs too.

He's that type of guy that when he occasionally saw couples that seemed to have an adultery relationship, between intervals of work he would look into that couple and send a picture as proof of the act to the man's daughter. In other instances, he would slip into suicidal online meetings even though he had no intention of dying himself and listen to their stories before making them fall asleep with sleeping pills and run away.

Don't you think he's the worst?

If you thought that, then your sense was right. You shouldn't approach that kind of person. If you can, it's better to never get involved with him. For me, well look, my sense is wrong I guess. I've been friends with him for more than ten years. For you to reach me at this point, you should know that I'm not normal, right?

Is he still alive? Yeah, that was a foolish question. He's still alive and that's why you're asking. It's just that everyone has said that he may really be dead, so, well, I guess it doesn't matter either way. Even if he is alive or dead, it won't really change the feeling of his existence. Ostensibly he is not the kind of guy to stand in front of people.

The first time I met him was in middle school. We were in the biology club together, but he's a bit different from back then.

That's right, he changed just a little bit. It's not like he is some cutthroat, and naturally he isn't even some saint.

Good and evil, strong and weak, love and hate, hopes and despair, capitalism and socialism, conservatives and progressives, aristocracy and democracy... Well, isn't there many structures of antagonism? Like with love and hate being one in the same, you disregard the difficult of thinking those things out and think of the simplicity of it in the end.

If there is a pendulum that swings between those two extreme ideals, then he likes to watch that swing.

His reason in living.....No, if I went with that it would just be one kind of illness then.

Nevertheless, when you think the pendulum is stagnate, he would adequately make the pendulum sway, knock into other people's pendulums, and after doing those things would then watch the reactions. He's a guy that cannot live without doing that.

For that, he's also the guy who would use those logical people or even the police. As a result, he doesn't care if he gets arrested, hurt, or ends up dying at worst. Really, it may be the same as breathing or eating for him.

Yeah, without a doubt it's an illness. That guy has the ability to collect extraordinary information, so I think the world really is unreasonable.

Yeah, he's certainly extraordinary. More than information collecting, that is accumulation. He may look at information as one piece to his collection. The amount of information he grasps is really, how should I say it.....non-standard or sly. It wouldn't be strange to call it a cheat if you compare it from a game of today. 'If there is a god in this world, why does he not preempt it?' is that type of feeling.

God, huh.

If normal people had about the same information collecting and processing as him, wouldn't they assume the role of god and manipulate various things? I wonder about that.

Just because he outwardly does work with the layout of human lives, he doesn't like managing all other people's lives. He'll manipulate events from behind the scenes, but he's not that assertive of a man.

Although, no matter the result he would happily accept it with a face that 'it was all according to my calculations.' And everyone gets easily fooled by that.

He sees through all that. Everything up until now was in the palm of his hand. They misunderstand that and despair arbitrarily. He enjoys seeing those expressions on people. Only looking at his personality, he would only be an 'evil spirit,' a 'mysterious existence the world has not seen.'

I wonder if there are people who remember him with those sort of images. In actuality, it's not an impossible mistake to make of him as such.

I want you to try and imagine it. The man who suddenly appeared in front of you knows more about you than you yourself. That fact in regards to the field of information should make him be called someone with an 'adaptability' or perhaps someone 'broad minded and free in disposition.' If it is something connected with life and death rather than being broad-minded then it is the 'power of life and death,' but anyway, if there is a human has been troubled by him, Izaya Orihara has that type of image.

Certainly with that meaning he may be a 'miscreant.'

But you see, it doesn't mean he is a villain. This is the most troubling thing though... It's not like he does it with bad intent. Really, he does it because he loves humans.

He's the 'smoke and miasma'. He is the poisonous mist itself. Even if he means no harm to his opponent, just by being in the area it's harmless to humans.

But the troubling thing is...the misfortune for humans is that he follows them.

Love...

That's right. He loves humans.

He loves, loves, loves, loves humans, so he just wants to see. The various expressions humans make.

Of hurt, of joy, humans that sing of love, humans that release hatred, and in his mind child birth and murder is considered the same. Perhaps when he was a kid he may have admired God or demons. He likes to prepare a wall on other

people's life rails. The people who cross over it and come to a happy ending, or the people who crash into the wall and end with a bad ending. He would say 'either one is a wonderful human life. I love them.'

He said this before.

– "If there is a life no one scorns, then I think at least I have to give them love. I don't mean to love them out of a sense of obligation. Really, how should I say it....just genuinely like them."

Like that.

Yeah.

I think you already understand. If you want to have a normal life, not getting involved with him is the best answer.

There's been times someone has abruptly been dragged into it by his whim, but that's not always the case. Rather than suddenly throwing in a bomb in a peaceful place, it's originally from the burnt land or incident.

It's not like the proverb "wanting the mountain rain to come to fill the wind tower," but in the surroundings where he is involved in, an ominous air swirls around in advance.

If you can realize even that, you should get away immediately. If you do that, I think you will be fine with not getting mixed in with that troublesome love or idiosyncrasy of his. If you don't want a normal life...Well, I won't stop you though. I bet there are a lot of people who get involved happily.

-Selected from listening to Izaya Orihara's acquaintance, person K.

Translation Notes:

1. In Japanese, there are many different types of personal pronouns. You use different ones based on your gender and/or for your position/who you are addressing. I couldn't come up with one to indicate the "polite tone" Sozoro has for a personal pronoun. But he uses "soregashi" (某), which I'll be honest, I never knew before I started reading this character's lines.
2. Tantanmen Ramen is the Japanese name for the Chinese dish dandan noodles (or dandanmian). It is a Szechuan dish of noodles with a sauce of

sesame paste and chile oil.

3. Kaedama is an extra serving of noodles you can order when you have mainly the broth left. This only applies for ramen noodles, not for udon or soba.

一 喜 劇 亭

あの男は何者だ



Chapter 2: Who is That Man?

There were currently two powers acting as they pleased in Bunokura.

One was the Adamura group with the rights to the mine and extensive roots in the town from the general workers to the local gangs. With the town substantially under their thumb to where even the laws were twisted towards them, behind the scenes they were feared by the people who had given them the name “feudal lord.”

The other was the force concerned with the individual politician Munenori Kiyojima. Contrary to the Adamuras, he specifically had extensive roots from the neighboring cities and congress to every bureaucracy. At a glance Kiyojima’s power may be considered to be small compared to the large group corporation, but he also was tied with outside gang organizations and could be called a powerful person who could use his influence on both sides of the company.

Both parties had a light grip over the city, but to the people it seemed there was no relation if it was just the two of the competing and glaring at each other. But over the years their glaring relationship began to fall apart. The trigger was the redevelopment plans for this town’s port.

Receiving the support from the cities in the area starting with Hagane city, the wave of a major city development including establishment for an airport came in. If it succeeded it would be a huge project yielding hundred billions of profits. It could be said the two were at the time deeply opposed one another in relation to its development.

The Kiyojima side advocated for joint development at first, but Jingorou Adamura laid the groundwork with the port’s fishermen and made a maneuver to raise the foundations of the port to oppose the development of the fishing harbor from behind the scenes.

Kiyojima, realizing that, used his influence behind the works and tried to control the amount mined in the country. With a portion of some rare metals and a small portion of gold being mined, it moved under the name of market value adjustment, but naturally Adamura turned it down.

But those proposals that could not be passed were a distraction, and taking the chance of the Adamura Group pursued that correspondence while Kiyojima grasped a portion of the town's interests.

Even after that quarrels continued in various forms, the feeling of a cats and dogs relationship hung in the air between the two forces. Though the uneasiness was like that from the start, in recent years there were rumors being spread that "the supply of the silver mine is going to dry up soon," and the tense situation of the balance of the powers continued falling apart at the seams.

As the times moved forward, many people left the city that was controlled by the Adamura group, and Bunokura came to a gradual decline.

Even so the peace was apparently kept, but that signaled the end of those days too. Ryuuchi Adamura, recognized as the heir to the Adamura group, was murdered by someone.

A Few Days Later The Bunokura Police Station, The Chief's Room

"Well, well, for sensei to stop by."

The one who said that was a still young police chief. He was in his mid-thirties, but being a hardworking character he was inaugurated as the chief of this provincial city with his foothold towards a promotion.

The man nearing his fifties called sensei, the parliamentarian Munenori Kiyojima, said to the chief who was looking over obsequiously from under his glasses with a disappointed expression.

"Even I didn't want to come."

He reclined back with his legs outstretched on the visitor's sofa and glared at the chief standing beside the office desk. His hair mixed with white strands was tightly kept back, and he wore a business suit over his plump body.

"I just wanted to hear the words from your mouth so I can be at ease is all."

"At ease, you say?"

"It's about the case from the other day. That idiot son of Adamura's was murdered by someone."

Kiyojima spat out the terms “idiot son” to refer to the dead person as; words that would surely cause an uproar if the media heard it. But the chief corrected that with his insincere smile.

“Well, it’s still not decided as a murder.”

“Then you’re going to treat it like a suicide? Even before it would have been impossible for you to simply erase the network in the developed company like that.”

“Yes, my apologies. I did not mean that.”

“It’d be appreciated to not direct it to the case. If you joked around saying that was a suicide at this time, it would be the end for us if they say “the police erased the Kiyojima’s murder.” In addition to that, the suspect would give false accusations against my stupid son.”

Kiyojima annoyingly spat out.

There was a reason why he said stupid son. His son Douma Kiyojima was by no means a son of good disposition, but a man who did as he pleased, enjoying misusing his father’s power. Since he also currently did not want to stand on the public stage he continued to engage with a young gang called the Oukarengou.

Although, since Kiyojima mediated the crime organization, it could be said the Oukarengou right now was also one of Kiyojima’s pawns.

After changing locations in this town, he collided with Ryuichi Adamura who was a big shot among the same local kids many times since his student days, and there were times the two gangs clashed and were even close to killing each other.

Both Adamura and Kiyojima, who became part of the scandal, erased the event mutually, but from the people living in the town the discord between Ryuichi Adamura and Douma Kiyojima was an open secret.

And so the rumor that “maybe the one who killed Ryuichi Adamura was Douma Kiyojima” sprung forth at once.

“We’re suppressing the media on it, but there are junk articles in the

magazines written with the rumors too. We also cannot fool the internet these days. I would like you to stop those worthless rumors going around.”

“Um.....I would like to confirm one thing, but for formality’s sake it may be necessary to ask for your son’s alibi to dispel any futile doubts, so please do not be concerned.”

The congressman Kiyojima nodded with a sour expression at the chief’s words.

“.....Naturally. It’s unpleasant, but it can’t be helped. I’ll tell Douma he has to work this out too.”

“Thank you very much.”

The chief relaxed in relief as Kiyojima brought up another concern.

“More than that the Adamura guys believing those sort of rumors unjustly may resent us and attack.....such a situation could happen. If it’s just a skirmish we could use their scandal, but if they snap due to the shock at losing their son it’ll be a problem for me if they interfere with my sound truck.”

“I don’t think they would go that far, but.....We’ll keep an eye out for their movements.”

“Then that’s fine. Also, if you see my Nana and that illegitimate child walking around town, I don’t care unless he’s with Nana. I’ll leave it to you so contact me.”

“Y-yes.”

The chief replied while giving a big sigh in his mind.

– The last one will be quite impossible. She’s not an elementary schooler.

The one other unique connection between the Adamuras and Kiyojimas was the relationship between the third son of the Adamura household and the eldest daughter of the Kiyojima household.

By nature, the two were not meant to cross one other. Perhaps it was a further joke of fate, but they loved each other way before the relations between their two families worsened.

The Same Day – The Adamura Head House, Living Room

“What the hell’s this ‘investigating from both sides as a case and an accident?!’ Screwing around like that!”

One man yelled at the tablet screen, having seen the news on the net from the last days before.

In the slight vastness of the living room, there are several men and women. The one who yelled was the second eldest son of the Adamura family, Ryuaji Adamura. Just having finished the funeral the day before, he checked the information just as he finally managed to calm down again only to be enraged at what the article had written for it.

His height was probably more than 190 centimeters. Along with his aggressive look, the young housekeepers shook in fear of him. Then next to him a man releasing more pressure than him from his shorter height and muscular body, the head of the Adamura family, Jingorou Adamura, raised his voice.

“Quiet down, Ryuaji.”

“How the hell can I calm down from that, pops! That Kiyojima bastard! Killed! My brother!”

“We don’t know for certain. It could be an outsider who targeted their mutual fall. If you move carelessly the Adamura family will be crushed.”

“Is this the time to be calmly calculating things!? Wasn’t he important to you!”

Adamura plainly told the animated Ryuaji.

“Yeah, but more than a dead man right now you’re more important.”

“Uh.....”

“Don’t make such a ruckus. And don’t show your impatience on your expression.”

He said words fitting for a broadminded person on the outside, but his eyes were completely cold, piercing through Ryuaji with its sharpness.

“You’re already the successor to the Adamura group.”

“.....Y-yeah.”

Feeling the pressure pressing down on him from above, Ryuji's face forcibly froze.

The head Jingorou addressed everyone in the room from the family and attendants to even the maids.

“At any rate, don't show any weakness. For times like these move more discretely than usual. I'm not saying not to move at all though. Open your eyes and strain your ears. Don't avert your gaze from the reactions of the townsfolk.”

“If there is the time we have to move, we will, so please rest assured.”

The one who said that was a man thought to be in his mid-thirties standing in the space of the room. He was the young leader of the gang, the Futsuku group, associated with Adamura: Udagawa.

“Yeah.....but don't you move so evidently as well. If the group is concerned about the profits, I'll compensate for its decrease. Tell your boss that too.”

“I'll greatly oblige.”

The young head of the gang bowed, while the father acted respectfully.

Comparing the two, Ryuji considered his father was more like the Yakuza type, but of course he did not mention that.

If this was a normal town, having just the head of a gang directly enter their estate would be enough for a scandal. But Adamura was fine to call him and all the members to their main residence. Though he did not call for the boss of the yakuza, the young head Udagawa was fairly well known in the underground of the town.

In other words, just that much would not become a scandal.

The Adamura group, at least in this town, had built up that much of a firm foundation.

“This is in regards to the rumors around town.....I am unsure if it is something related to Ryuichi-san's case directly, but a few days ago there were some strange rumors.”

“Rumors?”

“Yes, it seems there is someone intentionally spreading a rumor concerning the Adamura and Kiyojima families.”

“There’s always guys doing that though. Such a disgusting bunch.”

Ryuaji spat out. He thought if it was just a false rumor to harass them with they could suppress their freedom of speech or just ignore them, but-

“No, this time it is scattered information being leaked that could put both sides at a disadvantage or an advantage.....”

“It’s right after the incident. The guys in town are just gossiping about their own guesses.”

“The problem is among those rumors there are many truths mixed in. For it to occasionally be right, and for there to be some of our network, they could be pursuing the information even in our group.”

“.....”

At those words everyone in the room fell silent.

“Also.....if I am correct. There was a rumor regarding Kazuhisa and Kiyojima’s daughter.”

“Eh.....”

A man in the room openly reacted at that. He was still around twenty years old. His name was Kazuhisa Adamura. He was the third son of the Adamura family, and unlike his father and brother, he was neither tall or muscular but had a completely fragile and harmless presence.

“Kazuhisa, you bastard.....”

Ryuaji openly frowned towards his younger brother.

“It can’t be, you’re still dating that bitch?”

“.....It has nothing to do with you, right.”

“Of course it does! You’re leaking the base of the rumors to them!”

“I’m not making trouble. Even if the rumors were let out, I’m not in the

position to listen to your and dad's secret talks in the first place."

He averted his gaze as he said that, but Ryuji grabbed a hold of his chest and yelled.

"Your existence itself is bothersome! Having the filthy blood of that whore....."

"Ryuji."

Silencing his son's words, Jingorou quietly called his name.

With just that Ryuji had cold sweat forming on his back and could not speak further. On the other side of the coolness of his father's words, he felt the clear anger in it.

"A dirty woman? You're calling the *woman I chose and bought* dirty?"

"Ah.....no....."

Everybody in the room realized the retort was misplaced, but there was no one to point out Jingorou's words. It was because everyone knew. That to the man Jingorou Adamura his wife he was arranged to marry and the mistress he had relations with through money were nothing more than "property." And that he viewed his sons Ryuji and Kazuhisa as "possessions" more than actual "family."

"I think I told you before, but while he has a different mother than you, to me you and Kazuhisa are the same with half of my blood running through his veins. So Ryuji, you just ignored the part of my blood in him and looked down on Kazuhisa?"

"N-no....."

"So are you indirectly insulting me? Me, your father."

Ryuji's back shook at his father's voice.

Ryuichi and Ryuji were famous as notorious bad individuals since their student days, and no matter how many wrongdoings they did in the town they were not reprimanded by their parent but instead most of the events were erased by him. But when he threatened a man stronger than him who he got into a fight one day saying, "If I ask my old man, he'll put your family out on the

streets,” he was hit in the rear with a pickaxe.

— “You are my dear son. Even if you killed a person or two I would erase the act. But I don’t plan on letting you use my position, nor do I plan to push you around.”

— “Why should I spend time to kick others out on the streets for you? That’s quite a bit of time, you know? Crushing a human life without the media getting in on it. On top of that, you even used my name and warned your opponent “we’ll put your family on the streets.” For making me do such absurd work, what will you compensate for me?”

— “If you had the time to threaten someone with my name then you should have crushed that kid with a surprise attack. If you carelessly killed him, then I would have erased the incident at that time.”

Recalling his father’s unique moral perspective Ryuaji felt his old wound throb.

“Please wait, pops. I’m sorry. I didn’t mean that. I misspoke.”

“Is that so? Then that’s fine.”

He answered Ryuaji who was pale as he said that, and then continuing on he turned his gaze to Kazuhisa.

“Now then, how about it? Are you still dating that daughter of Kiyojima?”

“.....We haven’t even seen each other recently. This isn’t the time to see each other, right.”

“Is that so? It’s not something I really know but don’t behave in a way as to let Kiyojima use it as the Adamura’s weakness. At that time you will have to dispose of that girl after all.”

“Wha.....She has nothing to do with our problems!”

Kazuhisa glared at his father from right in front of him rashly, and Jingorou stated to him.

“Whether you or that girl intend to or not, do you think Kiyojima would accept that seriously? Even if I said do as you like, would you solve the problem on your own? Even though there are rumors connected with the house’s

problems, why do you say she's not involved?"

"....."

Kazuhisa turned silent, but even so he did not look away from his father.

"Well, it doesn't matter. Kiyojima would reject it, but I don't give a damn about the girl who is neither a politician or anything for that matter. Until the mess is cleaned up, just behave yourself."

".....Understood, father."

"Still for you to stare me down head on.....It seems you have more guts than Ryuji."

Seeing his father chuckling, Ryuji looked over at Kazuhisa while grinding his teeth. But whether he thought he would incur his father's wrath if he said something poorly again, he made no move to speak up.

After a brief period of time, Jingorou addressed each person in the room including the servants again.

"You guys, don't get bothered by the poor rumors. Be even more careful to not behave like the origins of those rumors."

"Ah, that's right. I just remembered, but....."

Waiting for the pause in Jigorou's words, Udagawa speaks up.

"What is it?"

"Do you happen to know the name Izaya Orihara?"

".....No, that's a first."

He looked around the room, but Ryuji and Kazuhisa also tilted their head to the side in confusion.

"That Orihara....whoever it is, what is it?"

"Well, Izaya Orihara. When I looked into the rumors it was a name that kept coming up so I got curious. I do not know if he is the person who directly spread the rumors and it may just be a coincidence, but since it was a name I was unfamiliar with I thought to ask."

“Have you looked him up?”

“I checked with city hall, but he does not appear to be a person from this town at the least. Well, there’s the possibility of it being a fake name though..... Even when I looked it up online I couldn’t really know. At least if I had his name in kanji it might have been different.”

In any case with “Orihara” being written as 折原 or 織原, Udagawa and his men were unsure how “Izaya” would have been written but searching it under just katakana did not come up with any satisfactory results. Even when they tried to search “Izaya” with the Kanji 伊座也 or 伊座夜 it was the same result, so they stopped there.

“Well, with the sense that the people who gave the name heard it from ‘a friend of a friend,’ it seems they did not meet with him directly, but we will look into it further just in case.”

“Yeah. Don’t look over the trivial details. If someone new enters this town during this time it could be someone under Kiyojima. Keep that in mind and be on guard.”

Among the people in the entire room who heard Jingorou’s words, there was one person shaken up by it.

– It’s already too late, master.

One of the maids – a young girl wearing an old style maid outfit – whispered that in her mind.

Her name was Azami Niiyama. She was a new housekeeper who had not even been here for a half year.

Suppressing the impulse to show that disturbance on her face, she managed to keep a calm expression and continued to stand in the room.

– I can’t say it, right.....

– The relationship between Kazuhisa-san and Kiyojima’s daughter.

– That the one who told Orihara-san that was me.

Two Days Ago

The man named Izaya Orihara was really a strange man.

She went out shopping for a bit on her day off, and just as she was about to rest at a park, a man in a wheelchair was pushed by two children around elementary age all the way to the side of the bench and called out to her as though she was an old acquaintance.

“Hey, what’s wrong? You look depressed somehow.”

“.....Who are you?”

She thought it was some kind of new technique in flirting, but that would be too bold by bringing two children for that. Since it was a new face to her, she tried to ward him off lightly.

However, he continued, saying something she could not ignore.

“Well, it’s the first time we met, but you’re famous, you see. Azami Niiyama-san.”

“....Why do you know my name?”

“I said ‘cause you’re famous. To work at the feudal lord’s mansion is enough to be admired by the common people.”

“.....!”

She quickly looked around the area. She thought one of Sensei’s people may have come in contact with her to try and obtain information on the estate.

“Ah. No, no. This isn’t anything I would do to you over. If that was the case, I wouldn’t have called out to you in a place like this; obviously I’d use a car to kidnap you off the street at night.”

After smoothly saying such ridiculous things, the man gave his own name.

“I’m Izaya Orihara. I just came to this town. I don’t know much of this town’s customs or tacit understandings. So I’ve been asking around from various people.”

“Izaya.....Orihara.”

Thinking of how unique the name was, she decided to hear him out and not run away, feeling a bit relieved for now with the children present.

“Ah, when I asked the elderly women walking in the park they talked about how nice having so many housekeepers employed are. And then they said, “Look, that child over there.....that’s Niiyama’s Azami, and she’s also a maid at the estate,” so I got curious.”

That’s a lie, Azami thought.

She was a person who came from outside the city. There should not be any house wives walking around in the area of the park saying “that’s Niiyama’s Azami-chan.”

Azami was unsure whether to point out that lie or pretend to be fooled, but the man Izaya cheerfully continued on with the conversation.

“Yeah, I’m not saying to tell me the Adamura family’s secrets or tell me the evidence of their crimes. It’s bad to say that, but if they were a family to tell secrets to even a housekeeper then they would have been crushed by Kiyojima immediately.”

“.....”

“I just want to know the mood of this town. You can even tell me the gossip you heard from your friends. Or something you happened to hear on the roadside. Or something that immediately became famous in this town.”

“Is there something I can earn for that?”

The man answered Azami’s question.

“That’s right. I’d be fine giving you money for it, but that may make you thought to be a spy. If you don’t want that, then I can give back gossip for the gossip.”

“For instance?”

“The weakness of someone you don’t like perhaps. If it’s about that I can look into it right away.”

“Even if it was the congressman Kiyojima?”

She chuckled, thinking of it as a joke, but Izaya answered plainly.

“Of course.”

“.....”

“Though for someone of that position, it’ll take a little time. Ah, but the ones who take the most time are the seriously hardworking salarymen. They are people with no distinctive weaknesses and with so many of them even finding anything takes time.”

Was he serious or was that also a joke?

Unsure how to respond, Azami decided to change the subject for the mean time.

“Is something wrong with your legs?”

“Yeah, a while back I got into some trouble in Tokyo.”

“That’s a unique wheelchair, isn’t it.”

“It’s a custom-made product. It can move electronically, but I also move it with my hands or have those children push it.”

Hearing those words, Azami looked over to the children taking a walk nearby.

“Are they your little brother and sister?”

“Ah.....Well, it’s kind of like looking after a relative’s kids.”

– “It’s like,” does that mean they’re someone else’s?

She was intrigued by Izaya’s words, but seeing the mentioned children smiling she decided to drop it.

“Well anyway, for bringing along children you must be a nice person.”

“I wonder about that. I could just be the Pied Piper of Hamelin, you know?”

After Azami laughed at Izaya’s jests, she slowly phrased her words. She thought after talking this far without telling him any “gossip” would be wrong. But she really was limited on gossip to talk about.

“.....That’s right. Well, more than gossip, this is something from the past.....”

And thus she started to talk with the intent of chatting.

A gossip she knew of.

There was a boy raised as a child of a fatherless family he originally knew nothing about. He fell in love with a certain daughter of a politician, and they came to mutually love each other. But when his mother died of illness his father came to greet him.

It seemed the boy was the child of a mistress, and the man thinking of his legal wife who had died a few years ago in an accident seemed to decide to acknowledge him and take him in. But the boy came to know. That the girl he loved was the daughter of the man who opposed his father.

"I see. It's like the modern Romeo and Juliet. And the end was with both of them committing suicide?"

"You say some crude things so easily....."

"I think it's just an opinion unique to humans, though?"

Azami sighed a little at Izaya, who was smiling while shrugging his shoulders.

"With the illegitimate child becoming a candidate of inheritance, it seems he ended up being shunned by his older brothers, Ryuichi-san and Ryuji-san. So then perhaps he ended up getting bullied by them where the master of the house couldn't see it."

Realizing they were talking about information she should not have said, Azami turned pale and said.

"Ah, um.....for this, that I said it....."

"It's alright. Concealing the identity of the person who gave information is part of the job."

Smiling lightly, Izaya looked up towards the sky and began to speak as though half to himself.

"My favorite part of Romeo and Juliet is that the story continued a bit after the two already died. They didn't cut the story once the two met their tragic end, but they show the audience the reactions of the characters after that. That is truly great. Well, this is completely my preference though. If a tragedy really happened, I have the desire in me to see the reactions of the people who caused it too."

“Is that so?”

“Yeah, I like to see humans welcoming a tragic end, but it’s important to me to see how the humans thrown right in front of it would react.”

“You don’t have very good hobbies.”

Azami says exasperated.

But Izaya just said “I’m told that often” and shrugged his shoulders again.

“Well, I don’t want you to misunderstand, but it doesn’t mean that I only like tragedies. I love even comedies and happy endings. But I’m satisfied with just the change of human’s hearts in them.”

Having said that, the ringtone of a cell phone in Izaya’s pocket went off.

“Oops. It’s a text.It seems I have to head back soon. Thank you. You really helped me out.”

“No, I really didn’t do that much.”

“I feel like I’ll be seeing you again.”

After saying something that made her think it really was a new tactic at flirting, Izaya called for the children and like that left the park. Lastly, he turned back towards Azami and with a bright voice.

“Until that time think about it, alright? The name of the person you want to grasp a weakness of.”

“.....”

Should she have at least asked for his contact information? Or would it be fine to not get involved and forget about it?

She was hesitant for a moment, but then she heard the voice of the boy.

“Hey, Izaya-san! What’s an illegitimate child (*mekakebara*)?”

“.....Ah”

She thought with them playing a little ways off it would have been fine, but apparently he overheard their conversation.

Azami averts her gaze feeling awkward, but Izaya smiled happily and

answered.

“It means *shoshi*. Maybe it’ll be easier to understand to say it’s the opposite of legitimate child (*chakushi*). Well, various human figures are born so I like it. I have heard of illegitimate children living happily with legitimate children, but it’s true for the opposite. Just hearing information about a hidden relative is quite exciting.”

– This person may be the worst.

Azami nodded in her mind deciding not to ask for his information.

In front of her, the boy tilted his head like a Java sparrow.

“Illegitimate (*shoshi*)? Legitimate (*chakushi*)? What are those?”

“It’s not good to always ask me. How about looking them up in a dictionary yourself? Or you can ask someone else other than me. Like Azami-san over there.”

“.....”

The one staring Izaya down was the girl next to the boy. Apparently she understood the meaning of the words.

“.....You’re terrible. Izaya-oniichan.”

“I’m told that often. Thank you. Now then, shall we head back?”

“.....”

The girl gave a small sigh, and after glancing over towards Azami she spoke softly as they began to leave.

“Onee-chan, it would be best to not get involved with this person too much, alright?”

Her eyes were filled with a dark color in them, and with a voice for only Azami to hear she said.

“.....Or else your life would be wrecked like ours.”

Present

In front of the housekeeper recalling the events, Ryuaji raised his voice in

irritation.

“If he knows some things about us, then there’s no doubt that Orihara bastard is working under Kiyojima.”

“Although he doesn’t belong to either camp, there is a connection with unrelated ordinary people and magazine writers.”

Udagawa supplied, saying it was too early to decide, and Jingorou nodded at that.

“Yeah. But either way talking and gossiping about us is troublesome. When we catch him we’ll shut him up. It’d be fine if we can keep him quiet with money. If he wants to be greedy, throttle him appropriately.....is what I would like to say, but doing that may be Kiyojima’s aim. Don’t carelessly make the wrong move.”

Everyone in the room nodded at the head, Jingorou’s words. But only one person, Azami, strictly avoided the others’ gaze. Although since she had her face turned downward while nodding, no one noticed.

And then there was one other person in the room making a sullen face. It was the young leader of the Futsuku group, Udagawa.

There was one information he purposefully did not say here. Mixed in with the town rumors one of the “true stories” were something upcoming.

– ‘In the Futsuku group, there are several spies under Kiyojima.’

Naturally Udagawa knew he was not a spy, but it was clearly evident that information on their side was getting leaked to the other side. Perhaps there were one or two people leaking out that information.

But there was no way he could admit that that rumor was true at this place.

– But I don’t understand.

Udagawa thought.

If someone is leaking out the information purposefully, who would that be for?

On the chance leaking the rumors was for Kiyojima’s group, he could not think as to why to let out the fact there were spies. Their aim may be to build up

suspension to destroy connections on the inside, but if that was the case he did not understand the meaning of mixing it in with the town rumors.

If it was for the Adamura group, why give the name of the Futsuku group?

Could it be an organization trying to replace the Futsuku group and try to get close to the Adamura family?

Many questions come to mind and disappear, but no clear answer came up. Relying on just one hint, there was no choice but to break through the situation.

– Seriously, what a terrible inclination.

Izaya Orihara.

If he was truly the heart of the rumors, he had to find him no matter what. Even if he was dead by the time he reached him. It was because even though it was neutral right now ,when Kiyojima's side got involved then the Adamura side would be in serious trouble.

One Week Later Late At Night – At the Night Club “Yami Ouzu”

“Izaya Orihara? Who’s that?”

At the counter seat in a nightclub on the coastline of the city, a man with a sharp gaze frowned. He was a young man wearing a gaudy jacket and initially looked to have honest features, but from how he behaved he emitted a different air than of most respectable people.

“Right now, it seems the guys of the Futsuku group are looking for him.”

The skinhead giant, who was more than two meters tall, sitting beside him quietly nodded. Even if one could say he was sitting next to him, the width of his size was wide enough for one empty chair placed between them.

The man took in a deep breath that rattled his large body, and the skinhead man said.

“I threatened and asked someone I knew a long time ago in the Futsuku group why they are looking for him.....and it seems there were strange rumors going around.”

“Rumors?”

“The troubles around your father and Adamura’s men. And leaving out things that happened or didn’t happen. Even the relationship between your sister and Adamura’s third son. Listen, Douma, it seems the fact you’re connected with us. the Oukarengou, has been part of the rumors too.....You don’t know anything on him?”

“Not really..... Damn, is that Orihara or whatever a freelance writer or something? Messing around with us. No matter how many die, they still don’t learn?”

The man named Douma made absurd comments as he gulped down the glass.

He was the eldest son of Munenori Kiyojima, and in relation to the recent incident with Ryuichi as someone close to him had said “the fate from their schools days has finally been settled.” He had a valid alibi, but on top of having connections with the people of the Oukarengou like this, it would not be strange to doubt him as the offender if he had someone do the job.

There were freelance writers who tried to write articles of the conflicts between Adamura and Kiyojima in the past, but for those who crossed “a certain line” Douma knew they ended up in drowning accidents or they went missing. So that man Orihara was probably the same as the people who spread around rumors in the city, write articles based on the reactions and then try to sell them in magazines.

Douma thought that and irritably said.

“Tch.....every one of them are doing this because that idiot Ryuichi went up and died. I had the plan for me to kill him though.....”

“I’m just asking to make sure, but it really wasn’t you, right?”

“Of course it wasn’t!”

Hearing the skinhead giant’s words, he yelled while setting the glass harshly on the counter.

“According to the rumors his eyes were gouged out, but if I did it I would have skinned him! So this isn’t some joke that some guy in the Oukarengou did it, right?”

"I cannot say there isn't, but they would not cause you trouble. If there was a rebound, I'd knock them all down."

"Well, I know your strength, Tadeura."

The skinhead man named Tadeura was a hooligan not associated with the gangs at all but was the leader of a group of outlaws commonly known as "half gray" – the Oukarengou. He was an old friend to Douma, and he was a man used as cover when he did mischief. Although, Tadeura had been saved by the influence of Douma's father Kiyojima, so it would be adequate to say their relationship was using one another. As the large built man said he had the self confidence to turn over a person if it was just one light motor vehicle with a physical strength deviated from normal people.

Douma did not grasp the entire power of the Oukarengou, but if one would think simply in just numbers, they had more than the Futsuku group. Since the Futsuku group had been employed by the Adamura family since the Showa era, they did not belong to a bigger group system. As such, there was no concern of them being driven out of other cities even if the Futsuku group disputes. That was a reason for the half grays of the Oukarengou and the organization of the Futsuku group to be able to oppose each other, but for the half grays unaware of that they thought, "we have the power to compete against the gangs," and so the number of people had increased.

Currently in the night club there were mainly members of the Oukarengou, so even if a person from the Futsuku group came in they could deal with him as long as he did not have an arm weapon. Of course if he randomly shot with a sub machine gun that would be different, but they knew the group was not so careless to cause such a huge ruckus.

And so to Douma he used this meeting spot as a safe haven more than his actual home, but—

A slight hoarse, dignified voice called from behind him.

"Excuse me. Is Douma Kiyojima-san here?"

"Aah?"

The one who called for him was an old man. He looked like a master of a

coffee shop, completely unfitting for this place. He stood up proper with his back completely straight, giving him the impression of the occupation of a secretary or butler.

After he stood there for a while, Douma decided it was probably a messenger of his father.

“Tell dad. I’m not a kid anymore, so don’t tell me what to do.”

“No, I (*soregashi*) am not a messenger of Munenori Kiyojima.”

“Aah?”

At the use of the first personal pronoun “*soregashi*” the possibility of him being a butler or secretary mostly thinned.

– Actually, *soregashi*....isn’t that like the historical play?

Then, who is this old man?

An answer did not come up for the question he thought of. There was the possibility he was someone of the Futsuku group, but he could not think if that was the case he could come alone to a place like this.

– Who the hell is this old man?

He would be glad to drive him away, but in the case if he was someone related to a politician other than his father made him a little unnerved. Convincing himself that he was twenty-eight years old and could discern the situation of this extent, Douma quietly addressed him.

“So then, who are you? Are you someone who came from an Uzamasa movie or something?”

“Pardon me, I am known as Densuke Sozoro. This elderly manner of speaking is a habit of mine, so please pay no mind to it.”

“So, Sozoro-san, was it? What do you want from me?”

“My employer would like to talk with you on the phone.”

The old man held out a cell phone he took out from his pocket towards Douma.

“Aah?”

“The call is already connected, so please go ahead.”

— This isn’t the exploding type of cellphone, right?

While still doubting, Douma put the cellphone slowly to his ear.

“Hello.”

[Ah, nice to meet you. You are Douma Kiyojima-san, correct?]

“Who the hell are you?”

Douma wondered what kind of prank this was, but immediately after that a more ridiculous proper noun was interjected from the other side of the phone.

[It is Izaya. Izaya Orihara.]

“.....Haa?”

After a moment of confusion, he immediately regained his composure, and while looking over at Tadeura sitting next to him he recited the name.

“Izaya Orihara, you say?”

“!”

Tadeura squinted and after he glanced over at the old man, he slowly got up from the chair. Moving away from the seat a bit, he sent a hand sign to the Oukarengou in an area not too far off. It was a sign meaning ‘there is a high probability of a dispute happening.’

The subordinates understanding the meaning quickly stood up and started to have the general people besides the Oukarengou in the building to leave. Although the “general customers” seem to know the unspoken rule of coming to the establishment that was the Oukarengou’s home, so without any complaints they left the facility.

During the time those procedures were going on Douma continued conversing with the person on the other line.

“Izaya Orihara.....That’s a name I haven’t heard of. Where would a hick like you be from?”

[That is not nice. How about we not probe into one another. Though it looks like you are more brawn than brain, but you are at least smart enough to

recognize the information that Tadeura-san gives you regarding various information of the town, right? There is no way you do not know of my existence.]

“.....Just who the hell are you? What have you come to this town for?”

Douma said with a click of the tongue, and the man named Izaya answered.

[I am called an informant. I just would like to purchase information to sell from you. Of course I am willing to compensate. Naturally money is fine, or even other information you want is fine.]

“An informant? There were a lot of people who said that in the past, but each one of them were just trash trying to make pocket money. Of course, just by listening to them I politely strangled them.”

[How scary. I cannot bear getting strangled. So how about we just talk?]

The joking voice of the informant suggested.

Douma, not realizing the danger, cautiously chose his words.

“They rubbed me the wrong way. It was the time. Even if they provided something beneficial to me, I could only think of them as a possible spy for the Adamuras.”

[Certainly. But this is a meaningless conversation to ask who is backing me. On the chance that even if I came to this town by your father or other politicians in the area, I would not tell you. Perhaps I could have been called for by the dead Ryuichi Adamura? To save you from your predicament.]

“What the hell are you saying? There’s no way that idiot would save me.”

[Who knows? One time in the past he teamed up with you right? When you chased out that gang that came from another prefecture a few years ago.]

Douma unconsciously squinted.

It was true that happened, but that was already ten years ago. Furthermore since them teaming up was completely behind the scenes the only ones who knew the truth were the delinquents Adamura had and a portion of subordinates of the Oukarengou which at the time were still a small gang.

“.....I don’t know. You aren’t that special if you managed to grasp fake information.”

[Now that’s rude. So, the incident after the fact with Ryuuchi trying to mess with your sister Nana is also fake then?]

“.....”

– Why.

– Why does he know that?

– The people who know that shouldn’t be much. Even Tadeura shouldn’t know.

– Ryuuchi then.....? Does this guy really know Ryuuchi then.....?

-No, there’s no way Ryuuchi himself would say it.

While a warning bell was ringing in his head, Douma snorted in an attempt to keep his composure.

“.....You nutty or something? Or did you do too much dope and you turned into a crack head?”

[If that means if I am crazy or not, then from the normal person’s perspective I may certainly look like it. If you meet with me directly I think you will clearly see. Sozoro-san will escort you, so would you mind coming to where I am?]

“Ha.....No, I’ll refuse. You’re not crazy, you’re just the normal asshole.”

Douma smiled widely and said with a large voice so the Oukarengou men behind him could hear.

“I’m not going to your place! You’ll come over here!”

[.....]

“If you don’t want this old man Sozoro or whatever to get killed, there’s no other choice. We’ll rip off this old man’s nails, look up where you are, and have a barbecue party at your bedside. Right until the home burns down.”

With an atrocious smile, Douma briefly glanced over to the old man.

“For now it’s 500 million. If you’re such a competent informant, then you can

handle that much, right?"

The general customers had already left the facility, and all the workers pretended not to see. Several members of the Oukarengou stood in front of the hallways to the entrance and exit and were positioned to not let the old man escape.

"Well, that's how it is. Curse your bad luck of being employed by that crazy guy, old man."

Even when hearing the Douma's pitiful words, the man named Sozoro did not change his expression. He could see him slightly repositioning his glasses before he made a small sigh.

From the phone he heard the playful voice of his employer.

[Really now. Do you not have the heart to respect the elderly?]

"Said the guy who sent the old man to a place like this."

– Hmph, acting tough.

– Shall I have him hear the old man's screams?

Sending a signal with his eyes, the young members of the Oukarengou stepped towards Sozoro from behind. In their hands were wine bottles, and they were prepared to easily hit him.

– With the next reaction, this old man will be a sacrificial pawn.....

Just as he thought that, there was a response from the other side of the phone.

[Actually, Douma-san. Your price estimation is wrong.]

".....Ah?"

[If you really could catch Sozoro-san.....I do not think it would be odd for me to put down one billion.]

There was a dulls sound from behind Douma. He thought it was the sound of someone getting hit with a wine bottle, but what reached his ears next were the cries of the young members of the Oukarengou.

"Aaaaaa!? Arghaaa!"

“!?”

When he looked the wine bottles that were supposed to be in their hands had fallen to the floor, and the joints of their elbows and shoulders were bent in odd directions. In the old man’s hand was a wine bottle one of the young members should have had at some point.

“500 million.....Hmph, is my worth 500 million?”

Glancing over the area while in thought, he turned to Douma and bows.

“Th-this....”

While bowing he made a clean hit on another man who tried to grab him from behind, throwing the bottom of the wine bottle from below to hit him in the chin. It appeared he maneuvered the bottle he had with one hand behind his back with the movements of bowing.

While a pool of blood streamed from his mouth, the attacker collapsed to the floor. In front of each person in the area dazed, the old man addressed him while letting out a small sigh.

“I do not mean to be rude, but your price estimation is marginally off.”

While stating that to Douma, he reached out to the two youngsters who jumped him at the same time. The points of his stretched out fingers on each hand press into the attackers throats, and his thumbs sunk deeply into their Adam’s Apples to crush them. With that he turned his body and vigorously threw the two men who already lost consciousness.

“Ughh!?”

The members of the Oukarengou let out a small cry and move away.

“If I became decrepit enough to be caught by the likes you.....I would not even be worth one yen.”

After saying that without a change in attitude, Sozoro had a thought.

“Though I must say the ‘bad luck of being employed by that crazy guy’ comment is evidently correct. It is enough for me to have thought I have finally reached my critical age at seventy years.”

[I can hear you~, Sozoro-saaan.....Can you tell him that?]

That voice came from the phone, but it did not reach Douma's ears.

"H-hey! What are you doing! It doesn't matter! Take out the weapons, the weapons!"

Douma stood up from the counter seat, cowering, and opened the distance while still clutching the cellphone.

With that, next to Tadeura a tall member hoists a small table in the box seat and came forward.

"Die! You old geezer!"

And he swung the table down.

Sozoro narrowly dodged it, and then stepping on the table lightly he jumped onto the counter. On his way down he swhung the wine bottle with all his strength on top of the large man's head.

"Gah....."

The man fainted.

The ten men left in the establishment, having each taken out their knives and stun guns, stood where they were without the intention to use it and without taking a step forward. If they attacked as a group they could probably beat him, but no one wanted to be *the last person to have the tables turned on them* and so together they hold back.

Taking that interval of those few seconds, the old man reached for the beer shelf on the counter and grabbed two sake bottles of especially high alcohol content.

"Sir, I will repay you later, and with them being the ones to move first.....I wish for your forgiveness."

"Eh?"

He apologized to the bar owner who had his mouth open in shock, not following the situation, and in that time he opened the lid of one bottle and stuffed in a handkerchief he grabbed at some point into its opening, took out an

oil lighter and set it on fire. Once confirming the end of the handkerchief was ablaze, Sozoro threw it towards the entrance of the facility without hesitation.

“Wai.....”

In the middle of someone’s dumbfounded words the bottle shattered on the floor near the entrance, and a captivating flame quickly spread.

“Is this geezer serious?!”

“Put it out! Put it out!”

Everyone’s gaze was affixed onto the flames.

In actuality, the Molotov cocktail was made by alcohol and not gasoline so most of it already was extinguished, and unless it spread onto the curtains it was not much of a threat.

But Sozoro wanted to show it here. The sake he was currently holding would burn for certain if he lit it.

While the men near the entrance batted their jackets down to put out the fire, Sozoro made his next move. He put down several glasses on the counter, and while moving off the counter he smashed the glasses with the bottom of the sake bottle. The glasses were crushed by the bottom of the bottle multiple times for those few seconds and were spread out as fragments on the counter.

Quickly taking them in hand he brandished the stance like that of a baseball pitcher and threw them towards the men in the facility. The glass pieces strike into the arms and heads of the men, spreading out like gun shots.

“Ughaa!?”

“This guy! He’s seriously bad!”

The men were now in a panic. Half of them bore hostility, and the other half started to notice they were at a disadvantage against this old man.

“Re-reinforcements. Call for reinforcements! It can be a metal pipe, a bat, or anything! Prepare long weapons!”

“Get out from the entrance and call someone!”

The Entrance

The door was beat against, but the door could not open.

A wire was wrapped around the handrail next to it and the door knob, sealing the door with little force so it would not open. The ones who were sitting pressed back against the door were a boy and a girl a bit before middle school age.

The door was shaking a bit before and with the screams of “Damn! Why won’t it open!?” punches and kicks were hit against it from the inside.

While feeling the vibrations at their backs, the children did not move from the front of the door.

“It actually feels kind of nice having the banging at your back!”

Next to the boy with a lively voice, the girl tampered with something without a word. It was a local jamming device to obstruct waves of mobile phones, which a license was needed for use in itself. It was a small product, but it was a device with enough power to obstruct the mobiles in the facility.

In the boy’s hand he held high quality pruning shears he already finished using. It was used to cut the telephone line and the internet cable connected from the telephone pole to the inside of the bar, and with an innocent smile the boy called out to the expressionless girl working the jamming device.

“Hey, it seems like it went well, so I wonder if Izaya-san will be happy!”

The girl, after thinking for a few moments, answered expressionlessly.

“.....I think Izaya oniichan will be happy like normal even if we fail.”

In the Facility

“Damn.....The phone! It won’t go through! It shouldn’t not go through!”

While yelling that, the men became more panicked. The old man picked up more glass pieces off the counter and brandished them again. If they hit their eyes there was the possibility of them losing their eyesight. The men realizing this truth all covered their eyes from the old man – and even Tadeura who should be used to fighting looked away for a moment.

But in that time the glass shards did not come flying, but instead there was the sound of liquid pouring.

“Ah.....?”

Sozoro went over to Douma who also covered his eyes in just one breath and threw aside the remaining highly alcohol based sake.

“Wha.....Wai.....”

It was already extinguishing, but the fact the sake could burn was imprinted in his sight.

And then the old man corrected his stance, and with the oil lighter in hand he bowed respectively.

“Now then, mister Orihara is waiting, so please come with me.”

With the ignition for the lighter still in hand, Douma no longer felt like opposing Sozoro. He briefly glanced over to Tadeura, but he shook his head with an anxious expression. Those eyes felt like they were saying “this old man would seriously start a fire, so behave.”

Perhaps he arrived at that from the noise or Sozoro’s voice, but a joyous clattering voice came through the phone Douma was grasping tightly.

[Really, how careless. You honestly thought I sent a normal old man to such a dangerous place?]

And without confirming whether that reached his ears or not, he expressed comforting words.

[Although, I like it.....that carelessness.]

The Next Day, The Entertainment District

“Mister Sasazaki, thank you for the hard work.”

It was near morning.

The underling of the Futsuku group Koshino bowed his head, but the corrupt detective Sasazaki only whispered a “yeah” with no aspiration before trying to take his leave.

“Ah, can I have a bit of your time?”

“.....What is it? It’ll be a problem if we’re seen together out in the open with our positions.”

“This time of day is fine, isn’t it.”

At the very least with people setting up the shops in this neighborhood there was no one who knew the dark rumors about Sasazaki. Although with the someone informing the police he knew another person could do the same thing the shop owners did not dare to blame him. Since they were concerned for their own future, they could not use the media or internet and complain about the damages.

In the middle of such a situation, as someone relatively working well with him without dispute Koshino thought if it was Sasazaki maybe he would know something and decided to try to ask him.

“This is just a rumor, but it seems a strange guy came to town.Do you know who Izaya Orihara is, sir?”

“....No?”

Sasazaki’s answer was quiet feigned in calmness, but in that brief time Koshino feels something out of place.

“Are you sure? There’s no way you are some dog sent in, right?”

“Who knows.....if that was the case, I wouldn’t know.”

Sasazaki quietly said and got up to leave. Watching him take off, Koshino addressed the underling next to him with a quiet voice.

“.....Tell the others too. If they see Sasazaki, keep a watch on him.”

“Eh? What’s up with him?”

Koshino answered the underling’s words with a bit of uncertainty.

“.....Well, I’m not sure, but.....I feel like he is hiding something about Izaya Orihara.”

In the Police Station

“.....Was I noticed? No, there’s no way....”

While sweating profusely, Sasazaki whispered that in the station’s hallway. He was worried about that doubtful gaze Koshino had when he departed.

The other day he did tell Izaya Orihara the situation of the town, but he did

not think to hear that name from Koshino. Having been contacted sometimes with “if you have new information please tell me” since then, he has not directly met with him.

– Are the Futsuku group guys looking for him?

He considered that honestly, but if he told them Izaya asked about all the different matters about the Adamura family he would get into trouble. He thought he would probably be erased, but naturally on top of there being huge risks, there was a bigger possibility of the tables being turned on him.

Sasazaki, unaware the men in the restaurant had been hired university students, firmly believed Izaya was a member of an organization with a certain scale of power.

– Then is he really someone from Kiyojima’s group?

– No, originally it was the Futsuku group, but after a few days the men of the Futsuku group are desperately trying to search for him.....Is this kind of scenario possible?

– Either way, the best thing to do is to pretend to not know anything and not get involved.

Sasazaki pondered to himself as he was walking, but then a sudden voice called out to him.

“Sasazaki-kun, do you have a moment.....?”

“Yes?! Chief!?”

The one who addressed him was the police chief younger than Sasazaki, Kakinuma. He was part of the career track, and he heard rumors that his duty as the police chief in this land was something like a seat before moving to headquarters.

Since he would be gone soon, he thought he did not need to suck up to him, but for the other to call for a common detective like himself perhaps he planned to say something about the cynical comment after lunch the other day.

The chief asked Sasazaki, who was thinking that while concealing his impatience.

“Yeah, I thought you would be the best to know both sides of the town.”

“Haa.....”

“Do you know there was an uproar at a nightclub on the coastline last night?”

“No.”

Since he was not off duty today he had no plans to show his face around the coastline area within the limitations of his work.

“I see.....Well, I think you’ll be explained everything in detail later, but.....I wanted to ask a person at the scene like you. It involves the congressman Kiyojima, so I wish you not say a word of this to anyone else.”

“Haa.”

He thought it was strange for the chief to be hesitant, but he understood knowing that it was related to Kiyojima. If he wanted to take the certain route to move up honestly, he could not be disapproved of by the respectful Kiyojima congressman in the police headquarters and the National Police Agency.

– Now then, what did that idiot son do again?

Although congressman Kiyojima himself was not involved, but he had erased crimes committed by his son Douma in the past multiple times.

After he returned to the National Police Agency he did not know if he would have favors or not, but thinking it was probably not bad to sell favors to a man on the career path he decided to ask what the story was.

“Leave it to me. I am especially tight-lipped.”

– I hear him out, and I’ll have him revoke that cynical remark from before.

The chief smiled as though relieved towards Sasazaki who had made that statement with a serious expression, although he was still thinking of schemes to himself.

“That’s great! That’s a huge relief! About what I wanted to ask you.....”

“Yes?”

“Do you know anything about Izaya Orihara? It seems he caused some trouble with the son of congressman Kiyojima.....”

That moment, Sasazaki wanted to punch him from a few seconds prior, but everything was already too late.

Interlude: The Man Called Izaya Orihara ②

Izaya Orihara you say? That is quite the nostalgic name.

An informant....huh. Well, you're not wrong. Indeed, he was famous in Tokyo as an *informant*. To the end, he partially was anyway.

I also came to not be able to face the world, but for that kind of human, he was quite an interesting existence. At the same time, he was also unpleasant.

Seriously, where does he get that kind of information?

He was the guy who held plenty of information that makes you wonder 'why do you know that?' whether it would be the secret ledgers of a pharmaceutical company, information on the plans of an acquisition of property happening in the shadows of the town, or to even know the whereabouts of a guy who took and ran away with money from an organization.

Of course, it is not odd for it to have been erased.

We were given quite a bit of that kind of information, but also on the contrary, the informant Izaya Orihara probably also knows too much about us....at least I have that suspicion.

Well, I was almost convinced it was a suspicion. So furthermore, I used him as an informant. We also planned to erase him if he moved even a little into a hindering direction for us. Well, before that could happen he ended up disappearing from Tokyo.

I thought surely he died by the side of the road somewhere, but for someone like you to appear before me asking about him it seems he's alive somewhere. And on top of that, he seems to be making trouble like always.

Yes, trouble. He's just trouble. We made deals, but what he has done is not *business*. It's just play.

What he does cannot be called business. No, I'm not saying that with an ill

meaning. If it was business, then that distortion was certainly born, and with that there's no way you could allow that standing as an *informant* to allow him to do as he pleases. He would disappear almost immediately or become exclusive to a powerful organization somewhere. Or he would have no other path than to switch over to a sound business with more standardized criterion like a detective agency.

Well, leaving that aside.....if I can say one word about Izaya Orihara.....he's a brat.

He's just a brat.

He is certainly intelligent and has skills. But no matter how quick-witted he is, his heart is about that of a middle schooler or high schooler. His genius and his heart are not being kept at balance.

A guy with the boxing talent that could as well be called the highest peak for humans is someone who would not aim for the world championship but say, "if I can hit the prime minister or president with these fists then world conquest is not a dream."

This might be an extreme example, but that's really the kind of man he is. You may think this is a funny story, and maybe it actually is.

.....For watching the fire on the opposite side of the shore from far away anyway.

Please think of this.

If we went with the previous boxing example.... If someone says on TV 'I'll even punch the American President,' he would probably just become a target of sheer ridicule, no one knowing if he is serious or joking.

However, if that fist turns towards you, what would you do?

If the fist of the world championship came punching at you saying 'I don't like your face, so I'm going to overcome your existence. A first step for world conquest,' would you still be able to laugh?

If you laugh without realizing it until your face caves in that's a huge exaggeration. If you laugh as you are punched to the brink of death that is

another kind of lunatic. Well, the one who is able to laugh is an influential person able to choose counters to those punches.

Actually, if there is a human with greater abilities in information gathering than Izaya Orihara and can suppress all his actions you probably could laugh and watch even if you got dragged into his meddling.

If there is that kind of human, you wouldn't want to approach him much anyway.

Hearing that, have you become relieved? Or have you become weary?

If you were relieved knowing he's a kid on the inside, that's a huge mistake. A kid with power is the most dangerous.

Somehow it is often said it is like a sharp blade, but can you imagine what trouble a kid drunk on himself can cause if he has a gun or a Japanese blade? Brakes would not work. And information is more dangerous than a Japanese sword or handgun. It's because it is like a poison. It strikes when you are not paying attention.....it's not even a joke.

.....Although, is that the case? Izaya Orihara has lived?

If you meet with him, please tell him this: I will overlook everything until this point. So, don't get involved with Ikebukuro again.

You also should better leave town immediately if you can. Before the kids spread out poison in your precious town.

-A certain place in Tokyo, a member of a crime organization

Extracted from person S's testimony

Translation Notes:

1. Kiyojima is most specifically a member of the Diet, which is Japan's bicameral legislation branch. Basically the Japanese parliament.
2. 妾腹 – mekakebara (can also be read as "shoufuku") – illegitimate (born to a mistress or concubine). 庶子 – shoshi – illegitimate child (born out of wedlock but acknowledged by its father). 嫡子 – chakushi – legitimate child. The term Haruto overheard from Izaya is "mekakebara" which he

asks about. Izaya then just uses a more simplified term and antonym to explain it, which he still didn't understand.

3. Uzumasa – [Read about it here](#). It's the Japanese Hollywood (at one point).



Chapter 3: Use Izaya Orihara – Side A (Kiyojima Side)

Bunokura Police Station, The Chief's Office

There was a fight and a small fire at the Oukarengou hideout. Despite such a report rushing in, no one tried speaking about the situation in detail.

One of the veteran detectives was suspicious, and when he called for the bar owner on the stairs discovered there was a dangerous incident that occurred.

“Weren’t the casualties an arson and then a kidnapping.....Why wasn’t that in the report!”

The bar owner answered the veteran detective’s words apologetically.

“I was forbidden to speak by the Oukarengou. It would have been an uproar to hear they were almost crushed having been beaten by an elderly man, and then having the former member Douma-san getting kidnapped.”

Listening to him speak, it appeared he would not receive a damage report from the Oukarengou. The fire was also extinguished before it burned the walls, so even the bar owner did not want the story to become a big event.

As he said, if he poorly let the story out about the incident he would be killed by the Oukarengou, so he wanted them to spare him. But naturally with a kidnapping – let alone the victim being the son of a congressman – there was no way to leave the incident as it was. Each member of the Oukarengou was independently searching for the culprit without depending on the police, but there was no choice for the police to neglect it.

However, it did not become a huge uproar with the congressman Kiyojima getting involved. When the chief was about to try and contact the congressman Kiyojima he received a report from his subordinate. That Douma Kiyojima returned to the nightclub and after meeting up with each member of the Oukarengou returned to his home.

“According to the owner of the nightclub the name that was mentioned when he was kidnapped in conversation.....in other words the one who talked with Douma on the phone was Izaya Orihara. At the least, I know a man with the

name Orihara and an old man called Sozoro are not residents of this town. Of course there is a high possibility of them being fake names, but if such an old man was there he should have stood out way before then.”

“So they are people from the outside, then?”

Sasazaki asked.

It would have been bad if anyone in the area overheard their conversation, so after that they had moved to the chief’s office. In the room there was only the chief and Sasazaki, and it was leaking with a meek atmosphere.

“Since it hasn’t turned into an actual case, I cannot get permission to directly look into the office’s data base. But if this town is involved in other crimes, even if something trivial, then that would be a different story. It seems possible to investigate there for leads, but....right now besides that kidnapping case there are no names.”

“.....”

Sasazaki thought as he grimaced in his mind.

– He isn’t saying I’m involved.....

– But shall I use this story then?

“Actually, I have heard the name from the guys in the Futsuku group.”

“Really?”

“Yes, it seemed they were looking for a man with that name, but....perhaps he caused problems for the Futsuku group and not just the Oukarengou.”

“.....There’s no possibility of that.”

While the police chief was in thought Sasazaki continued and asked.

“Well, what did Douma have to say?”

“That too, I want you to look into it. As long as it is no more than an investigation, we can’t even do formal legwork.”

The chief said with tired eyes while giving a troubled sigh. It seemed there was the possibility of damaging his career history, so he did not appear to want to get involved with Kiyojima and Adamura’s troubles that much. It was also

true he could get into great trouble unprepared if he had to investigate prior to it.

“You probably only need to pretend to run into town and keep your ears open.”

“.....Understood. I’ll try.”

Sasazaki answered while hesitant.

It was not whether he should contact Douma or not.

It was Izaya Orihara.

Should he contact him, or should he not?

It was said he was a mysterious figure no one could figure out the Kanji of his name for, but Sasazaki knew it was written in Kanji as 折原臨也. It was not normal to read 臨也 as “Izaya.” It was so uncommon one would think it had to go through the application process even in public offices.

Normally even if it was searched nothing would come up, but Sasazaki was able to grasp various information from the results he searched under the correct Kanji. On the display board of Tokyo’s central cities Ikebukuro and Shinjuku sometimes that name came up. It also matched with the name of a victim stabbed by a phantom killer somewhere northeast a few years ago.

– Maybe the injuries he got when he was stabbed resulted him being in a wheelchair.

His spinal cord or lumbar vertebrae may have taken damage when he was stabbed from behind. Sasazaki concluded that by himself, thinking of that possibility making sense to him.

–But this may be a chance.

Sasazaki carefully thought after he left the chief’s room. Either way, it would be dangerous to stay in this town any longer.

If so, then the most important thing to do was to frame-up a well sound reason to give a letter of resignation to the police and run. But he would need money to escape too. If it was possible enough money to play around and live off of for the rest of my life. Since he already decided on running, Kiyojima and

Adamura did not matter to him.

– Well, if it was a mysterious informant.....

-I don't know which side he is on.

– Although I think he would leak information of the other camp he is not a part of.

If it was to gain that information, he thought he would not mind paying a price. Naturally he would not gamble his life, but depending on the situation he did not mind taking the highly classified documents the police had or the data of the investigations.

In Sasazaki's eyes there was a strong gleam in them that was not there before. He was only frightened by Izaya the day he met him, but seeing his name having started to spread throughout the city contrarily it hardened his resolve. If he was caught, he would not get away with handing over the information the first day either.

Understanding he was already sharing the same consequences as him, Sasazaki tightly clenched his fists and thought. That in exchange of letting himself be used, he would also use that informant as much as he can.

The Kiyojima Household

“Dad, let's crush Adamura.”

Just when he thought his profligate son came around to show his face at home he suddenly announced something foolish. Munenori Kiyojima let out a big sigh, thinking that.

“If I could I would do it immediately. Say something after you think for a bit.”

To Munenori his son had been a pain in his side since long ago. He was certainly important to him as a parent, but he regretted his naïveté.

He was fine using his political influence and money to make others obey him. But he was not alright with hasty violence. Erasing an act of violence was a pain and on the day his opposing congressmen knew it would become a current rumor used as a big scandal.

“I am thinking about it. I'm already twenty-eight, you know? It's not an age

where it's odd for me to be independent."

"Just when I thought you suddenly started saying something crazy, but you can't even see reality? It would be more odd not being independent until twenty-eight normally."

"Well, look, I'm also a part of the company, right?"

"Yeah, a job too good for you to only show your face once a week. I was a bit relieved that you did not treat that as 'being independent.' Then don't be so shocked if you think of telling me 'I'm already independent' will do any good."

It could be said Kiyojima's eldest son Douma's main job was to leech off of his father Munenori.

At first it was thought he watched on hand as a secretary, but Douma did not have the skills as a secretary and also did not want to be acknowledged as the congressman's employed secretary. Since there was the possibility that it would affect him nation-wide including the Diet members Kiyojima did not want his son to be a secretary at all.

– It'll be a problem revealing his past behavior when they look into his history.

And like that Douma did not become a secretary but a "staff member of a cleaning company with access in businesses Kiyojima was associated with in the past." Although since he only went to work and collected garbage when he felt like it, it was an appropriate situation to almost call him a "salary thief."

– It's a cleaning company I made for my son. I'm not worried of him getting fired.....but if the details of his wages are let out it may turn into a big fuss.

He paid him an extra amount in wages than the average cleaning personnel in the whole country, but half of it was money to shut his son up and to have a strong implication of a collar on him.

If he easily handed over money to him, he would have an underground business with the Oukarengou. And if done improperly he would have a hand in blackmail or selling illegal drugs.

Actually there were many times the police got involved in his extorted crimes during high school, and he was forced to erase them each time.

– Besides, this kid.....!No, I don't want to remember.

More wrongdoings tried to appear in his mind, but he shook his head, giving up.

“Whatever, how about you behave like an adult. That just happened to Adamura’s eldest son. What will happen if you move poorly right now? I have a lot of influence over the police chief, but if we take initiative and do anything that would make them doubt us it’s obvious the guys from the mass media would be quick to write about it. When that happens how much money and time do you think it’ll take to suppress that information?”

“Wouldn’t it have been for someone on the Adamura’s side to have done it? Killing Ryuichi.”

“What a foolish thing.....”

“If we win over the Futsuku group, the work to do the same would be simple wouldn’t it?”

“They are Adamura’s dogs. Even if we send in spies, the profits would not match the money we would have to pay to have them switch. We can only exploit them if we grasp their weakness.”

Shutting down the conversation, Munenori was considering to quickly head over to the office, but with next words Douma spat out they changed the direction of his thoughts slightly.

“If we get rid of Adamura and start the redevelopment plans, the organizations under the Medeii group would swarm to us for the interests. The day they express their desires and stand out they would immediately be crushed by them. Wouldn’t they quietly become your own army then?”

“.....”

Munenori was taken aback by his son’s proclamation.

He naturally predicted that happening behind the scenes, but he did not expect his stupid son who thought nothing but punching the enemy in front of him to think ahead on his first move.

The harbor redevelopment was a big project that would move a large amount

of money. There was a big possibility of many illegal organizations to gather aiming for the interests on it. But they would be crushed if they did not stick with the strong foundation that was Adamura.

“At the harbor development, that Adamura bastard stirred up the fishermen’s association and the owners of the coastlines and had them oppose the movement right? He paid the fishermen’s association with the settlement, but it’s obvious behind it all Adamura took a good sum from the fishermen, right?”

“.....Well, that’s about right. If that was simply a harassment towards me I would think he did it gratuitously, but if he was someone who doesn’t take that much of the interests, this ridiculous town would not have been made.”

“And that’s why we take in those fishermen and not let the money flow to him.”

“Ridiculous. There’s no way the fishermen would defy their stupid lord (feudal lord). The first thing even without that money coming in, that would not be painful to Adamura.”

Kiyojima tried to discard the conversation, but his son Douma mentioned one possibility with a wicked smile.

“But when the mine dries up, then it’ll completely change right?”

Half a Day Ago, The Royal Suite at the Bunokura Grand Palace Hotel

“You bastard.....staying at a place like this.”

“I like high places. I’m not hung up on royal suites though. If it was allowed, I would put up a tent on the rooftop’s heliport and be fine with sleeping there.”

“Shut up.”

Douma chattered with his teeth.

After he got abducted from the threat of the alcohol and lighter, he was brought to the most high quality hotel suite room in the city. The alcohol had already evaporated, and even if he started a fire it would not have covered the whole area, but he ended up unable to run, yielding to the pressure the old man Sozoro emitted standing behind him.

“So, what does a great informant as yourself having kidnapped me plan to

do? If you feel like trying to get ransom money from my dad, you should give up. My dad would use the label of “a tragic father whose son was killed by his kidnapper” and abandon me with it being too difficult to try. He may use that despite the culprit, the Adamura guys, spreading rumors and having the city under their thumb.”

He spat out and glared at the informant sitting in the wheelchair. And then the informant Izaya Orihara said, shrugging his shoulders.

“It can’t be you think I’m a killer hired by Adamura-san?”

Without using the respectful *keigo* manner of speaking like when he was on the phone early, Izaya spoke with an exceedingly friendly and casual manner.

“Do you not think of the possibility it was your father who hired me? His son who was likely to become part of a scandal would get in his way, and so he decided to have you disappear.”

“Ha. My dad wouldn’t go that-.....”

“Douma-san. Didn’t you say it yourself just a moment ago? He would benefit by becoming the ‘tragic father whose son was killed by his kidnapper.’ It would be killing two birds with one stone, actually, even if it was three birds do you really think he would have the options to not abandon you?”

“.....”

Douma fell into silence.

It was certain his father had a callous side to him.

But would he go that far?

As though to give the final blow, Izaya inquired further.

“Ever since you were little you strayed from the right path and played out every night that you barely went home. Just how much would someone like you be able to say you know your own father?”

“Just shut up a bit! I’ll kill you.....”

“Oh my, how scary. I wonder who would be faster: Sozoro killing you or you me.”

Douma clicked his tongue at Izaya's chuckling.

– Damn, if that old man wasn't there behind me.....

Imagining the scenario if he rebelled here, sweat formed on his back.

But Sozoro himself said after a moment of thought.

"I am awaiting for this person to kill you, Izaya Orihara-dono, so if I finish him as a bodyguard after the fact then I can clean up the stagnation of society while remaining innocent, correct?"

"Sozoro-san. That's awful. Going beyond calling a person a villain and call them a 'stagnation of society.'....."

"As long as you remain unaware of yourself, then there is no hope in saving you. More than evil deeds committed by ill intentions, I say it is more dangerous to commit evil deeds by good intentions, but for you who continues to defile the people around you just by your interests there is nothing else to properly call you than a stagnation of this weary world in human form."

"Thank you for the polite explanation. You hurt my naïve heart a little."

Though Izaya only shook his head with a smile, completely lacking the attitude of being hurt.

"Really now, why is it the people I hire always have such a sharp tongue against me more than necessary."

And then moving the wheelchair forward, he said to Douma while approaching him a small amount at a time.

"Now then, about why I called you here. Just like I said on the phone, I only want to collect information from you."

"Information.....? Ha, so you're really a spy for Adamura then. So you want some kind of weakness to grasp of my dad's?"

"No? What I want to know is just one thing. Since this is our first meeting, I'm hoping you'll become a regular customer, so how about I provide you a service? How about I give you one piece of interesting information first?"

".....Interesting information?"

While looking out of the window onto the mountains, Izaya said to the frowning Douma plainly.

“This town’s mine, you see. It’s already dried up.”

For just a few seconds, silence reigned in the suite room. The sound of Douma snorting broke the heavy silence.

“Ha.....what the hell are you saying?”

“There were only rumors about it from a long time ago, right?”

“Rumors are rumors! Even if it was, why would you know that!”

Izaya plainly answered Douma who was yelling strongly.

“What if I said.....I grasped the evidence on a registry that the Adamura group is receiving rare metals and silver from overseas?”

“.....”

“The mine was already dried up since last year too. Since then the Adamura family secretly have been receiving minerals from other places and made it look like they got them from their mine. Of course including disguised transactions in large amounts too.”

“Wait a sec.....Aren’t the ones losing out the other way around? There’s no reason to do that.”

“There’s a reason for that. The distinctiveness of the Adamura group is quite big.”

Izaya took up the high quality wine glass in hand while remaining seated in the wheelchair and rolled the barley tea poured from the PET bottle beforehand in the glass.

“It’s not like the gold mines and silver mines have withered. It’s just opening new gold mines and digging too much would have major effects on the market price of gold, so they excavate while also regulating it.”

“Is that so?”

“Most major companies buy another land and open another mine on some mountain when the mine they own dries up.....if that is possible, but with the

Adamura group too fixated on controlling the region they cannot show interest in starting new mining outside the town right now. Once they show weakness they would be targeted by the other big organizations and that would be the end to them.”

Douma unconsciously objected Izaya’s plain interjection of “the Adamura group ending.” They were enemies, but he could not think their sworn enemy who had been given the name “feudal lord” and who was controlling the town could be crushed with the mine depleting.

“There’s no way that could happen. Actually, they put their hand in many deali-....”

“To advance in those other dealings and control the town, silver....well more than that perhaps rare metals. What if they used the supply of those resources? There were plenty of people before me who searched the plans of having them received accommodations for flowing rare metals to particular companies.”

“No, there’s something really odd though. In the end, aren’t the ones losing out are the other way around? If they save up money I even know it’d be enough without effort.”

“Yes, and so it’s just them making-do.”

Chuckling, Izaya said.

“This town’s redevelopment plan....If it weren’t for that, they may have announced the unexpected closing of the mine.”

“Ah....”

“If they could firmly cut into the redevelopment plans, they would have received enormous interests. Enough change came in. Enough for the mine shutting down to not be that much of an issue.”

At that point Izaya cut off. After downing the barley tea in the wine glass in one go, he continued the *negotiations* with a light smile.

“Now then.....regarding the ‘evidence of them getting minerals from the outside,’ I’ll offer to sell it to you.”

Once again, the room was reigned in silence.

Douma also broke that silence again, but it was not a snort; it was the sound of gulping uneasily.

“.....In exchange, what did you want to ask? I don’t have any information to match that.....”

If it was his father’s love relationships he knew that, but he did not think that would counterbalance it, and his father would readily erase any suspicions raised of his lovers right now.

He was half-dead listening up until this point and not obtaining the crucial evidence.

Money probably won’t help, right?

Thinking until then, he suddenly thought of a question.

– Wait a second.

“.....Why me?”

“Eh?”

“You could get far more money negotiating with my dad more than me, and if the evidence is real, if it was my father he would give out quite a fair sum for it. No, he should be able to use the money from Adamura for blackmail. I could get killed, but if it is a person like you, you would be able to negotiate from as much people on the outside right?”

And then Izaya made a face understandingly and answered.

“It’s simple. I wanted to ask something no one but you would know.”

“.....?”

The smile was erased from his face, and Izaya gave his ‘request’ to the frowning Douma with a serious expression.

“I want to know in detail of the person who died here a while back: Ryuichi Adamura.”

“As much as you can. If it is information only you know, depending on the contents I’m fine with giving you 50 million in cash.”

Present, A Library Along the Coastline

At a library standing adjacent to the sea, a sea breeze came in.

The books won't get damaged faster, would it?

While thinking that, a girl was seated at the window of the library.

Her name was Nana Kiyojima. She was Douma's younger sister, and she was currently in her third year of high school.

She continued to read her preferred hard cover fantasy novel with a depressed feeling.

She liked stories where the unfortunate deceased souls reincarnate into another world unrelated from the earth. It was one righteous story told to her from long ago, but now she could not help but be jealous of the light novel's main characters.

The daughter of the congressman Kiyojima.

There were people jealous of those circumstances, but she could not help but feel uncomfortable about her situation. She was bullied due to it, and there were times she was chased on her way home from school by people who called themselves free writers.

There were plenty more people in unfortunate circumstances. She wanted to reason to herself she should be fortunate to just be able to live, but even so it was relentless to bare the suffocating feeling of this town. For the daughter of Kiyojima, she may have been suffocating far more than the regular person.

But right now she did not think of dying to fly to another world. She could not think of being the only one to go first.

".....Kazuhisa."

She murmured the name of the man who was her childhood friend and her sweetheart.

But there was no one to answer her.

There was no doubt she went through happy times. Just by being with Kazuhisa, she was released from the suffocating feeling of the town. Just being able to smile with him normally, to her the man Kazuhisa was an irreplaceable existence.

Until he was taken into the Adamura family.

They rejected everything of their relationship. More than that, he became the younger brother of Ryuichi Adamura – the man who messed with her and fought with her brother in a massive fight like a death match.

At first she put in an effort, thinking 'if Kazuhisa and I become the suspension bridge, maybe the opposition between Adamura and Kiyojima would vanish.'

It was certain she received trauma from the teasing she got from Ryuichi in the past. But she thought if she could handle even that then it should not be a problem. If it would make Kazuhisa happy, she could handle that much.

But she was reminded that the resolution of the two family's discord was quite a high wall. And that she was powerless and without her father's protection she was an existence that could do nothing.

Her father, mother and brother even told her, 'you were just tricked.' And then, even if she could reject that, she despaired over her weak self who could not change their way of thinking. With the backlash of losing what was most important to her, the suffocating feeling grew stronger throughout her days.

It would be wonderful if with him the two could go to another world – not a suffocating world like this Bunokura.

Thinking those thoughts, she quietly continued to turn the pages of the book.

And then a small voice reached her ears.

"Hey, miss. Are you Nana Kiyojima-san?"

When she looked over, there was a cute looking boy seated next to her. The boy still looked about elementary age, but there was no knapsack on his back.

Today is a day off, so is he a child who came to study in the library?

But why does he know my name?

Nana thought that to herself and tilted her head to the side, but the boy said to her.

"Um, I was asked by Izaya-san to bring you to him!"

"Izaya-san? Who is that?"

“He’s a good person! So don’t worry!”

Only saying that, the boy moved off the seat.

“Please hurry up! I’ll wait outside!”

Perhaps he was considering to behave like he was because it was a library. Saying that in a small voice, he headed over to the outside on quick feet.

As though he was the rabbit luring Alice to another world.

Interlude: The Man Called Izaya Orihara ③

Izaya Orihara?

Who are you? An acquaintance of Izaya’s? If that’s the case I won’t say anything bad. Keep a fixed distance from him.

No? I don’t plan on saying don’t approach him. That is up to each person. There are some people who like him, and there are some who find faults in his liking of other people. Well, he is good looking. That in itself made him a popular guy.

Guy friends, huh. I only talked to him occasionally, but I think there was only one or two people he was on good terms with.

Well, I won’t stop you if you want to be his friend. There are guys who find being by the side of a dangerous person like that brings a thrilling everyday life and it’s fun. However, I’ll tell you a few things.

You better not try to use him. You better not try to rely on him for anything beyond the essential. That guy Izaya is definitely omnipotent.

I know many people who listened to the information he has and become successful. But I know about the same number of guys who went through terrific times by being manipulated by his information.

Has he lied? Not really. He sometimes may lie, but I heard that the joke that he basically calls himself an informant is true. It just seems there were times he did not say what should have been said.

You may think he is a terrible person, but to him he blesses the path other people have chosen to take.

He likes humans.

That's what he self-proclaims. He always said since high school he liked the limitless potential of humans.

So that guy likes to stand behind the choices people decide on. Even if that clearly is the wrong choice.

It's amazing how well-connected and quick-eared he is. His information is certainly some miracle drug to humans at an impasse. However, drugs are also poisonous. Be around him too long and it'll cause an addiction past the heart burn.

So if you want to become his friend or his girlfriend-Don't lend an ear to the information that comes from Izaya's mouth.

It's fine sometimes, just don't rely on him. Don't use him.

On contrary, you could save Izaya. Understand Izaya and conversely thrust the 'choices' to him. On top of that, stand by the choice he decided on.

.....Well, it is not that difficult to do. '

If you were a normal friend you would do this unconsciously.

However, that is vital to him.

Izaya may certainly love humans. Equally and without discrimination. Although he is not an arrogant guy with admirability to bestow love unilaterally.

Before you think you want to be loved by him, before you think you want to become friends with him-You should love him first. You should become his friend. And you can see, he is a surprisingly loyal guy.

I think this is all I can earnestly say. But like I said previously, don't use him. It's dangerous to rely on him but using him is worse.

This is a story I've overheard, but.....before there were people who tried to use Izaya. One was a group that were selling some dangerous drug, and another was a group that operated some underground casino. They used Izaya and tried

to make him move like their pawn, but..... Both of them were crushed. They simultaneously were attacked by one another. He gruesomely crushed the guys who used him.

.....No? I don't have any intention of saying anything bad about him. But I wouldn't talk about it like this if he was a normal guy in the first place. Do you know why?

It's because you guys have that same scent. The group who would use Izaya and get crushed. So this is more like a warning.

Take a good look at him. He's certainly not a good guy. He may be a villain.

But....

He is also human, you know?

– A certain place in Tokyo, extracted from the testimony of the plasterer worker person K.

Chapter 3: Use Izaya Orihara – Side B (Adamura Side)

“Izaya Orihara again, huh.”

In a seat of his favorite high quality club, Ryuaji gulped down his sake while surrounded by the club’s girls.

The person in front of him was a still young hoodlum-like man. Hearing the man’s friends from a long time ago belonged to the Oukarengou he had him habitually tell him information on them, but the information he brought in today caused various waves in Ryuaji’s emotions.

– A nightclub that was one of the Oukarengou’s meeting spots was attacked.

At first, he thought it was one of the common disputes, but listening in full it seemed they were dealt with by an old man who suddenly appeared there. He initially questioned it, thinking it was some sort of joke, but then the term “Izaya Orihara” came up in the midst of the information, and squinting he ordered, “tell me from the beginning again.”

As a result what he understood was the old man named Sozoro seemed to be someone working under Izaya Orihara. And, although hard for him to believe, the subordinates of the Oukarengou were lead by the nose by that old man.

“The guys of the Oukarengou, what a good feeling...Although. What happened to Douma? If he was kidnapped like that, his father wouldn’t be quiet about it, right?”

“It seems he returned normally the next morning.”

“.....”

Ryuaji’s eyes narrowed.

If he did not come back, then that would be doubted as “Adamura’s instigation,” but him having returned was a more serious problem.

What was the reason for the man moving so strangely to kidnap and then release Douma?

– Does that mean they made some sort of deal?

- He was released peacefully.
- Is that possible?
- Getting kidnapped by a guy who picked a fight with the Oukarengou and then get released unhurt?

There was only one answer. They teamed up: the man Izaya Orihara and Douma.

- At a time like this he would team up with such a suspicious person? Why? Just what did they exchange?

Ryuuchi tried to build up an answer by gathering his deductions.

- Does that mean Douma has a grasp of some kind of weakness?
- A weakness of Kiyojima's.....
-
- My brother's case then?
- Then the Kiyojima group really did.....?

For him to oppose the Oukarengou would mean Izaya Orihara was not someone who was hired by Kiyojima from the start. If he was not with Adamura either, then he was a third party. If Kiyojima's side were the ones who killed Ryuuchi, then that information.....or in the case an outsider held the evidence, then that would be enough threatening material against the Kiyojima group.

- The timing is too good. I really can't think my brother being killed and Izaya Orihara not being related to it to be unlikely.....

Either way, with Izaya Orihara having made his move, then the identity of the person behind it must be clear.

Ryuuchi drank up the sake he paid for on hand, took out his cell phone and made a call to his father.

“.....Dad? I have a favor to ask.”

Not saying it in a way to indicate this was from the momentum of drinking, he collected himself and stated.

“...I would like to use the guys from Candiru. Call up the Futsuku group’s Usubara too.”

A Few Hours Later, The Adamura Family Household

Kazuhisa Adamura felt depressed.

There were no happy days since he was brought into this household, but he was especially depressed just being here for a while.

When his brother died tension began to rise between Kiyojima and Adamura. At first more than half of the people thought ‘Kiyojima was not that hasty,’ but in a scenario where after so many days and no identification of a culprit arising more people started to whisper conspiracy ideas that ‘perhaps it really was Kiyojima.....?’

In the midst of that there were rumors being spread by someone called Izaya Orihara, but just what is his aim? But thanks to that, he could not hide from the public eye and go see Kiyojima’s daughter Nana.

It was not that he was monitored regularly, but the day they were seen at their meet up place together forced separation would await them. Nana also had said, ‘he might send me to study abroad forcibly.’ He was unsure if he would do such oppression, but Kiyojima was a man who had power publicly and privately. He may send his only daughter to a distant land and confine her to a boarding school.

In these times if something like that was spread throughout the internet it may be impossible to completely confine her, but Nana did not have the intention to expose her family to the world, and with the same reasoning Kazuhisa also wanted Nana to try her best to avoid doing anything to be scorned by society.

Even he could not make a move.

Kazuhisa, who was one year above Nana, planned to enter university after graduating high school, but he gave up going into university by the troubles he was brought into, and so his position was turned into someone who failed the entrance exam.

His father gave him a simple answer, ‘if you are going to live with the related

groups of this household, you don't need university. You'll learn what you need to know as you go. If you want to live at another place then you are free to learn though.'

At a glance he seemed like an understanding father, but it was expressed as 'if you'll become my pawn, I'll shelter you. After that you'll manage on your own.' In truth even when he received terrible bullying from Ryuji he told himself, 'strike back on your own. If you don't have the strength to punch back use your wit,' but he did not stop the bullying in itself.

The exception was the statement Ryuji made like he showed the previous day in the living room. With the reasoning of him being a child of a mistress he was not made light of by his father, but as he could not change that, Ryuji made mean spirited comments to him minutely one way or another.

- I'm done with this house and city.
- If I can take Nana and get out, I want to leave here.

But it was not that simple.

If they did not have any means to live off of after eloping then they did not have the means to succeed in leaving in the first place.

Both families had plenty of money. Once having left to another land far away, they would easily be discovered. If their families had connections to authorities who would lend a hand to both sides of a company by giving cell phone history records and ATM withdrawal records, then they would be able to follow the traces from that information. *Could it be possible for them to look for jobs under completely fake names and be able to rent an apartment under those fake names? Or could he compel Nana to live in manga cafes or camp sites?*

The more he thought it over, the more impatient he became. Kazuhisa let out a heavy sigh when the ringtone of his cell phone went off.

"!"

It was from Nana. For times it was seen by his family he disguised it under the name of a male classmate of his from high school. When he quickly opened the text message, there was a sentence attached to it that made him doubt his eyes.

[Let's run away from town together.]

Kazuhisa did not expect she would make that sort of statement and quickly read through the rest of the text. And after a few seconds, the young man was left even more shocked.

It said they could run from the city and a person who would help them manage after that appeared, but-the problem was the name of their helper.

[His name is Izaya Orihara, but I want you to meet him once.]

Izaya Orihara (折原イザヤ).

There was no need to confirm it. The 折原 was read as “Orihara.” For “Izaya” not to be written in kanji was probably because it was not characters to easily convert.

That crossed through his mind for a moment, but Kazuhisa slapped his own cheeks to tell himself it was not the time for that. There was the possibility of the person being searched for by the Adamura group made contact with Nana.

Is that his aim? Or does he plan to use her as a hostage against Kiyojima for something?

Kazuhisa was filled with more impatience.

– I have to go.

Thinking that, the young man sent back, “I want to meet him too, so I want you to tell me where to meet up,” and decided to head for the entrance.

Then he saw his brother Ryuugi and many adults walk by in the middle of heading from the entrance to the living room.

“.....You’re in the way. We have important discussions to talk about. If you’re going out don’t come back home for a while.”

Ryuugi said, treating him like a lion chasing away a dog, and Kazuhisa tried to pass him on the side.

In the midst of that he saw the faces of those adults.

They were an unsettling group. That was Kazuhisa’s genuine thought.

The first to enter his sight was a man wearing a tight business suit. His hair

was kept all back and was wearing thinly tinted glasses. The next was a woman walking behind the man who had the exact opposite aspect as him. She was probably around twenty years old. Or she may be a bit younger, but he could not clearly tell her age.

After all she wore glasses, had Gothic-Punk looking makeup, and had cross chain piercings hanging from both of her ears. Her laptop had strange ornaments in black and red like her clothing with disturbing types of stickers like skulls and zombies on it.

– Candiru.....

Even Kazuhisa knew the existences of these two. They were from an organization Adamura worked closely with, and publicly they were called the “Candiru Co., Ltd.” but in actuality they were an underground detective agency that undertook illegal investigations through hacking or coercion to use even wiretapping bugs and hidden cameras.

They had investigated Kiyojima’s actions outside the city plenty of times before, but he had heard that Kiyojima was most vigilant of them. It seemed Nana was investigated by them too. Actually he heard the ones who first reported to his father that he was dating Kiyojima’s daughter was also them.

To Kazuhisa they were a group he resented, and the two in front of him were the man calling himself as the company’s director and the woman who was said to be the top of the information management division.

Kazuhisa attempted to glare at them but could not when he saw the silhouette of a person turning the corner in the hallway a bit after them. The one who appeared was a giant man with dyed blue hair who could marginally reach the tall ceiling of the hallway.

Black bandages were wrapped around his eyes, and the large black eyes seen in the open spaces were staring through. There were no bandages around his face from below his nose, but several painful stitch marks like music scores were etched around the top of his head. The muscle mass that was his body was clad in a business suit, and imagining those large hands possibly being capable of crushing a person’s face like an empty can Kazuhisa unconsciously shook.

– The killer of the Futsuku group.....!

If I remember right, his name was Usubara?

The man was given the name “the Feudal Lord’s Pet Whale” in town. This was the first time he had seen him in the estate, but Kazuhisa has seen him in town. Even within the Futsuku group he specialized in fighting, and that frightening outwardly strength would not be forgotten for the ones who had witnessed it once.

– Why....

– It’s not even the people from Candiru. To even call a killer to the head house, what is my brother trying to do?

– It can’t be.

An unsettling feeling swelled up within Kazuhisa.

Candiru were pros when it came to looking for people or collecting information. His father Jingorou had said, “naturally they are people from the outside,” so he had not frequently used them that much, but apparently Ryuaji thought differently.

What does Ryuaji want them to look into?

Who does he want the killer Usubara to finish?

Hoping to be mistaken, Kazuhisa was completely filled with one insecurity.

Izaya Orihara.

Have they been gathered to hunt down that man Izaya?

If that is the case – if Nana happens to be with that Izaya in that moment?

Turning pale at the thought of the worst situation, he left the residence behind as though to flee.

To see the face of his beloved Nana as soon as he can. And to ascertain who the man with the name Izaya Orihara was with his own eyes and depending on the situation, to save Nana from there.

Adamura House, The Office Room

“....You came.”

The grave voice of Jingorou resounded in the room left with sofas to greet guests. It was used when work was brought home as well as a private room.

“Well thank you.We did not receive much of a welcome though.”

“Naturally. Originally I didn’t want you involved.”

“My, you say that so upfront.”

Jingorou answered the man wearing the sunglasses, who said that as though troubled with a solemn face.

“There is also the case with my son. It would be a problem if he moves and stirs up a fight with Kiyojima. We’ll crush them when it is time, but I decide when that is.”

“We will not do that. Can you not you trust in us a bit more?”

“You guys are originally not from this town. I don’t plan on having you get in on the inside much.”

Jingorou Adamura used Candiru in the past to look into an organization from the outside meddling around. Although it was certainly not exaggerating to say ‘they are partial to him,’ but he was pretty reluctant to use them for Bunokura’s internal conflicts.

– They are like their name after all.

Candiru.

It was a name originating from the small carnivorous fish that inhabits the Amazon river. It was not that they had the large body of a shark, but it was said they were more feared than piranhas in the Amazon basin.

Unlike the relative gentle disposition of the piranhas, they were a fish that had the ferocity to attack far larger beings than themselves and slip into the body from the open holes and scars they bit into to eat their victims from the inside. No matter how large their opponent was, they used their power as a group and chewed through them thoroughly.

For an information collecting organization it was a perfect name. Jingorou

considered that anyway.

They only had the name of a public corporation, but behind the scenes it was rumored there were several tens of employees officially not employed in the company. The full 'other side' of the company was unknown, and although their registered base was nearby there was talk their real base was in Tokyo or overseas. Although, even for a suspicious organization as themselves, when they receive a request they punctually provided results. And so the 'employees that were not suppose to exist' were able to lend a hand in illegal activities.

Adamura would like to leave the illegal activities all to the Futsuku group, but they were weak in an information battle. Not having connections to major organizations in a wide area they were free to move as Adamura's protege, but they were separated from the information network in the organization so when it came to concerns getting involved outside the city they were left a step behind.

For this case his son Ryuugi had called him and said, 'I'll put down the money. Just make the call,' but for Adamura it was not a very interesting development. Ryuugi wanted to use them to find Izaya Orihara, but that matter itself would be stepping too far into Bunokura.

– If he only wants a fight, with the Futsuku group.....no, even with just Usubara is enough.

Giving a sigh, Jingorou briefly glanced over to the blue-haired giant.

"....."

Usubara bowed his head wordlessly.

He had a unique standing position even within the Futsuku group. Due to his outward appearance he could not move anywhere else besides Bunokura to finish certain cases without standing out. But even comparing the demerits there were just enough merits with that, and so he was appointed by Jingorou's preference of "simply liking a person strong in a fist fight." He did not have guns or weapons, but for a small gang he finished his opponents faster in time before the police get reported.

Moreover, since he could do modest work unlike his outer appearance would

suggest, he was truly an excellent capable person; excluding the ‘standing out’ quality which made him unsuitable for behind the scenes dark assignments such as assassinations and surprise attacks.

“.....I’m opposed to Candiru and Usubara moving at the same time though.”

“Don’t worry dad; it’s not like these two are going to be working together. It just seems there is someone with Izaya Orihara who is capable of twisting the Oukarengou around his finger. It wouldn’t stand out as much if we leave it to just Usubara instead of everyone moving without weapons, right?”

“If that’s the case, that’s fine.”

– I feel like Ryuaji is making light of both Usubara and him though..... Should I let him make a huge mistake and have him owe me?

Jingorou began to consider how much management his son would be allowed to have and what he could lend and borrow from him.

– I had Ryuichi under many *debts for his whole life*.

– Seriously now, he’s an ungrateful person up and dying like that.

Jingorou quietly exhaled, not thinking with hardly any emotions of their parent and child relationship mixed in.

–No, more than debts.....

Ignoring Jingorou in thought of something, the man with his hair combed straight back spoke.

“So, Izaya Orihara....it is alright for us to search for this person?”

Ryuaji nodded at the man’s words – a leader of Candiru, Isozaka.

“Yeah, that’s right. Izaya Orihara! Fish up any information on him thoroughly. Anything that could be a weakness. It may be a fake name, but it’s certain there is someone calling himself that and had contacted Douma.”

“Hmph....how about it, Nec?”

While shrugging his shoulders, Isozaka addressed the person on the other side of the sofa in the reception room. Hearing his voice, the woman sitting on the floor and reclining against the sofa – Nec – spoke back as she gazed at the

laptop connected to the wireless network.

“Hmmm. It seems like it can go through, yep. It seems there are kids that know of him in the Tokyo area, so I’ll check over there.”

“Seriously!? You’re fast! Tell me at once!”

Ryuaji tried to take the laptop, but Nec rolled over on the floor, dodging him.

“Not. Yet. I can’t hand it over until I confirm the information, old man.”

“Old ma.....”

Jingorou said to the open-mouthed Ryuaji.

“It’s obvious. What is the point of snatching the information before it’s all collected?”

“W-well, yeah, but.....”

In the place of Ryuaji who quietened in embarrassment, Jingorou addressed the two from Candiru.

“From confirmed information is fine. What’s priority is finding out what outside organization is backing him.”

“Understood.”

“Got it.”

Nec raised her hand in sync with Isozaka’s words, lifted her blue light reducing glasses and closed the laptop while cackling. And then the two left the room close on time. They did not bring up payment because they already did when he made the call earlier.

Moving onward, the flustered Ryuaji lifted his head, jerking it towards the entrance where Usubara was and gave him an order.

“Alright....Let’s go, Usubara. I have something for you to do.”

“.....”

Nodding his head wordlessly, Usubara went out of the room behind Ryuaji.

After Ryuaji and him left, Jingorou spoke to the young head of the Futsuku group standing next to him.

“Udagawa.”

“Yes?”

“I believe in Usubara’s strength, but right now he’s moving under Ryuujii’s command. I cannot believe in his command. You watch over their movements too. If possible, once you have grasped Izaya Orihara’s true motives contact me.”

“.....I do not mind, but what for?”

Jingorou answered Udagawa’s question while chuckling.

“That Orihara guy has meddled with the Oukarengou, but it doesn’t seem he came to this town specifically under Kiyojima’s or my suggestion. While not directly involved, he’s a guy who seems to brew up the town just by existing. He’s caught my interest a bit.”

“It can’t be, you plan to win him over? If Ryuujii-san’s story is correct, then there is the possibility he has made some sort of deal with Douma Kiyojima.”

Jingorou said to the frowning Udagawa with a far more human-like smile than his sons.

“He probably just set up the roots for transactions with a guy like that.”

“Oh, I thought you would avoid any disputes with Kiyojima?”

“I thought that. But with the guys from Candiru getting involved, I think it’s a problem of time for when the secret of the mine is let out.”

“....”

Only a small fraction of people currently knew of the secret details relating to the mine drying up. The current miners carried the dug up bedrock with machines, but they believed there was an abundance of mineral resources in there. Even if they deduced that on their own, there were many people noticing something off in each division for those working in the inner circle.

But the people who knew were kept away from the place through “promotions,” or were suppressed to speak completely of their views in a roundabout way. Since there were no casualties coming from that matter, there were many people who noticed that ended up accepting the “hush money.”

“I don’t know whether to use that Izaya Orihara as a scapegoat or drag him in to our side. But if I can pull beneficial material away from Kiyojima, then that is one way of going about to do it.”

“But, what about the danger?”

Jingorou replied back to Udagawa.

“Even if something happened now, it would just be Ryuujii’s misfortune, right? Then I can brush him aside and have Kazuhisa take the inheritance, or make the effort to have a fourth successor....Well, this is putting it frankly, but it’s a matter of who will inherit the group after I die.”

Udagawa nodded tiredly at the man’s words he had stated so readily.

“We the Futsuku group are allies of the ones who bear profits, so please do not worry.”

“....Then that means if we fail to blunder the redevelopment plans, you’ll follow Kiyojima?”

“That would depend on what the boss thinks. It is presumptuous I would have any thought in the matter.”

“You just took back your words in three seconds....seriously...”

After shrugging his shoulders in amazement, Jingorou grinned daringly at the man he had still yet to see.

“Now then, it’ll be enjoyable to see how much of an idiot this Izaya Orihara is.”

The Royal Suite of the Bunokura Grand Palace Hotel

This man may be more stupid than I originally imagined.

The reason why Kazuhisa thought this is because of the moment he saw the man in the high quality suite hotel room. The man took an elegant poise as he slightly swayed the wine glass he was holding with one hand and with his legs crossed as he sat in his wheelchair.

“Hey, you’re Adamura-kun, right? I’m Izaya Orihara. Nice to meet you.”

If he only started off the conversation like that it would have brought forth

the image of a puzzling man shrouded in mystery, but the problem with that was the elementary school child who started to push the wheelchair around the spacious room at full speed.

“Vroom. Vroom, vroom! Woohoo! It’s started to get fun Izaya-san!”

The child wiped his brow from sweat and continued to push the wheelchair around happily. Perhaps the child had excellent leg muscles or arm muscles, but he was running around the high class furniture at quite a fair speed. At that oscillation a bit of the liquid from the wine glass managed to spill out, but it seemed like the contents were the barley tea that was left on the table.

“What do you think? What are your thoughts of the man who deceived your cute lover?”

“Well, I.....”

Kazuhisa had no idea on how he should respond, and unintentionally averted his eyes from the man. In the previous glance, Nana was there. Giggling slightly, she watched the man’s state.

“Nana, I’m glad that you’re okay.”

“Yeah, I’m so glad you’re okay too...!”

Kazuhisa and Nana confirmed each others’ condition. As they were doing this, the man in the wheelchair, Izaya Orihara, was being pushed around restlessly.

“Hey, Haruto-kun, I’d be happy if you were to stop soon.”

“Okay! Izaya-san!”

Giving an upbeat reply, the boy named Haruto stopped the wheelchair. Whether it was because of the sudden stop or the way the man had his legs crossed upon the wheelchair, Izaya’s body was thrown forward, and from there he fell from the wheelchair.

“Whoa.”

However, with good timing he grabbed the nearby arm of the sofa and managed to slowly sink himself onto the sofa with his upper body before crossing his legs again.

“Fuu, Haruto-kun, it’s alright with me, but with other people in wheelchairs you must not recklessly push them around and then suddenly stop like you just did, alright?”

Nodding with a too simple-minded face, it felt unlikely that he really understood or not. Even while thinking that, Kazuhisa decided to ignore that and ask the man adjusting his seating on the sofa.

“.....Your legs, there’s something wrong with them, right?”

Izaya gave a composed smile as he answered Kazuhisa’s question.

“It’s just difficult to stand or to walk around. Relatively speaking, the symptoms are rather persistent. If I can handle the intense pain it brings like crossing my legs like this I can manage.”

“Was it from an accident?”

He thought it was a bit rude to ask such a question without restraint, but this was the man who suddenly summoned him to this place. The man apparently thought a little bit of rudeness was alright in this case.

“Something like that. An accident...Well if you can call picking a fight with and getting attacked by an enormous monster an accident, then I guess it’s an accident.”

“?”

“It’s an allegory. I only got hit by a steel beam, thrown away several meters, and was stabbed in my side with a knife while both arms were broken. It seems that the first injury dealt by the steel frame was the worst, and bones all over my body got damaged. But after that I stubbornly persisted, the anesthesia from my brain (adrenaline) eliminating the pain, resulting in continuing to pick an impossible fight with the monster.”

“Huh.....”

He did not quite understand the example with the monster, but he supposed he must have received terrible injuries, and this seemed to be part of the after-effects. Trying to comprehend the story, he thought perhaps after getting involved with the steel beam incident he participated in a foreign running of the

bulls event.

As Kazuhisa imagined such a scenario, Izaya further talked of his condition in an exceedingly cheerful manner as if to say his own injuries were not that trivial.

“Well, it’s not like I cannot completely stand, so it’s a small mercy I can use the bathroom or shower and can move from the bed on my own. It’s just it would be difficult to run around the town like in the past.”

“Are you in rehab right now?”

“.....If I rehabilitate at a decent place, they said I might be able to run around again.....But I don’t plan on doing that.”

“How come?”

Being asked straightforwardly, Izaya replied with a somewhat serious expression, all the while with a smile on his face.

“You see, this is punishment. My punishment.”

“Punishment.....?”

“Yes, my punishment. Up until now, I would flashily skip about and run away despite my meddling while saying I love humans. Well, the monster...no, that seems deceiving. I got caught by the man who distanced himself from humans, and ended up like this.”

Izaya let his gaze stray off as if staring at something far away and continued to smile with self-ridicule.

“If I really love humans, then I should not run away from humans, monsters who are distanced from humans, and real monsters. I tried to gain what I wanted from a fixed distance, and I always tried to stay in a safe place. In terms of love, this is impure. That’s right. It was impure.”

“.....?”

Izaya spelled out the next words as if to let himself hear it to the uncomprehending Kazuhisa and Nana.

“And so, I decided to not run anymore. I will hide from or trick others though.

But even then, if a human who overcame such a predicament arrived right in front of me, I thought I would try to confront that person fair and square.”

After saying such a strange statement, Izaya gazed at Kazuhisa and said,

“Well, since I was the one that called you over here, of course you stand in front of me like this. Even if I try to escape right now, like this I cannot. But I guess Haruto-kun here may save me.”

“Understood, Izaya-san! When it’s time, I’ll call the police!”

“Right, Haruto-kun. That will be an 80% chance of me getting arrested too so let’s not do that. I think the most certain thing to do is to call Sozoro-san, right?”

“Oh, I see! Izaya-san is really amazing! But if there was even a 20% chance if it was you it would be alright!”

Looking at the boy with twinkling eyes, he whispered, “you’re not making a fool of me are you.....?” But it seemed it did not reach the boy’s ears.

“Well, anyway, how about you standing before me face off with me fair and square? Although, it’s natural since I invited you.”

He was saying what he wanted, but they were words naturally spoken in riddles. While thinking that this was likely the man’s nature, Kazuhisa asked.

“Well, um, what does that mean? How much do you know about us.....?”

“How much, huh. Yeah, I guess that’s right. I’ll ask in return, but how much do you want me to know?”

“Eh?”

“Even you have one or two things you don’t want anyone to know, and your cute girlfriend also has her secrets, right?”

Izaya’s eyes narrowed, and the corners of his lips curled up in glee.

“Well, that’s fine. We’ll talk separately afterwards. What I want to know is information. To ask that information and not have it leak out it’s necessary to talk individually. For instance your lover enjoy a meal in the restaurant on this floor during that time. I think having a meal alone is pitiful though, so I’ll have

Haruto-kun be an escort.”

“Haa.....”

Nana was staring blankly, but Haruto came by her at some point and pulled her hand.

“Okay! Let’s go, miss! The Chinese fried rice in that restaurant is super good!”

The boy’s eyes lit up and drool poured from his mouth.

“Okay, I think I can pay if it’s just fried rice.....”

“Of course it’s my treat. Did you think you would have to pay?”

He threw the pouch he took from his pocket to Haruto. The boy took that, pulled her hand and said, “Okay, let’s hurry up and go!” Nana without feeling apprehensive, “W-well then, I’ll go ahead first! I’ll wait for you Kazuhisa, and Izaya-san.” She said and left the room.

“Your girlfriend is quite lenient even in a situation like this, isn’t she?”

After Nana left, Izaya asked Kazuhisa standing there with a dumbfounded expression.

“She always is in that dream-like state.....”

Even that was a trait Kazuhisa liked, but when she proclaimed ‘if you and I are on such friendly terms, then the relationship between Kiyojima and Adamura should improve too,’ he sagged his shoulders when her ideals surpassed into dreams.

Izaya said to Kazuhisa who let out a big sigh.

“It’s a good thing. Those sort of carefree, good people being around are fine too. Contrarily, realistic ideologists such as yourself are fine too. I can love them equally. Ah, I don’t mean that as anything sexual, so you can relax.”

“More than that, calling me a realistic ideologist, what do you-.....”

“*It’s obvious without you saying anything, you know?*”

“.....!”

He felt the illusion of Izaya’s words soaking into his backbone. Sweat formed

on Kazuhisa's palms, and he glared at the man in front of him as though looking at a monster.

"Really.....just, who are-....."

"Well, I just want to hear it. The scope of the truth you can tell."

"....."

"But if I can hear as much of your story....."

Grinning, the informant offers a "deal" to the shaking Kazuhisa.

"I'm fine with helping you escape from this town."

The Restaurant "Kongousaikan"

"Say, are you from here?"

Nana asked while waiting for her order of Chinese fried rice.

The price was more than five times the price compared to the kind one can get at diners in town, but as the daughter of Kiyojima it was not a price she had never seen before, so it was not an issue to fuss over to her. But she understood what it meant to be given such a high priced treat. Just thinking about the suite room he was staying in or the characteristic wheelchair he had, one would suppose he must be quite a wealthy man.

That was what Nana thought, but what she did not understand was this boy, Haruto. Since he called him 'Izaya-san', they probably were not siblings. She thought perhaps that they could be related, so she decided to ask the boy of his personal history.

"No, I'm not! I was born in Saitama!"

"Ah, is that so. That's pretty far...So is this Izaya-san from here, and you just came to visit him?"

"Well, no? That's not it. Izaya-san is a person who has lived in a lot of places...I wonder where he is from?"

"What's your relationship with him?"

"Well, Himari-chan and I were saved by Izaya-san. Ah, Himari-chan is that girl that came with us to this town, okay?"

“I see.....And he saved you?”

Nana questioned, and the boy Haruto easily spoke these words with little hesitation.

“Well, my dad was killed by Himari’s dad!”

“.....”

She thought that he was joking. Not understanding the boy’s intention, she waited several seconds, but the boy nonchalantly continued.

“And then mom and Himari’s mom, they were friends before, but they got into a huge fight, and my mom said I couldn’t see Himari-chan and other mean things, you see? And mom in the end stabbed Himari’s mom with a knife and then tried to kill both Himari-chan and I.”

“.....”

“And that’s when Izaya-san saved us! He said he knew my dad. But my mom and Himari’s mom were put in the hospital, and they said we won’t get to see them for a while.”

“.....so that’s it.”

Since he did not talk about it in a harsh manner, Nana at first did not know what to say. However, after having enough time and details to digest it all, she concluded that it was likely that the boy’s mother became mentally ill and was put into a police hospital or a specialty hospital.

“It must have been hard.”

“Yeah.....but I’m not lonely! Izaya-san helped me with a lot of things!”

The boy said with such an innocent face.

It was clear that this was not a normal story. If they really were saved, then why were this boy and this girl named Himari brought to this town all the way from Saitama? If it was a normal person several questions should be coming up one after the other. But just by looking at the boy’s smiling face, Nana believed him unconditionally.

“I see.....it must have been very hard for you, Haruto-kun.”

It was like the hopes of this dreamy girl was being pressed on reality. After bringing the boy in for a tight embrace, she smiled at him like an angel with tears accumulating in her eyes .

“But I think I understand.....That this Izaya-san is a really good person...!”

Evening, In Bunokura

– It got pretty serious.

In the middle of going out to do shopping, the housekeeper of the Adamura household Azami Niiyama let out a big sigh after confirming no one else from the Adamura household was around.

– I can't believe they would start looking for Orihara-san so earnestly.

Just previously when she was working in the home, she saw a suspicious man and woman and the famous yakuza member even in town Usubara enter the parlor room.

They did not want tea or anything, so she continued to clean the hallway without a care, but –

She did not intend to eavesdrop, but she had heard Ryuugi's large voice from the room. She was very gloomy since clearly hearing the proper noun 'Izaya Orihara' from in there.

If it got out that she was the one who leaked information to Izaya Orihara, she would not get away scot-free. Naturally she did not think she would be killed, but there was a high possibility of her getting fired.

– I have to.....I have to avoid that.....

It was a place she struggled and worked hard to get to. She could not lose that now.

But what can she do?

The maid gave a huge sigh.

She did not realize. That there was one shadow approaching from behind her.

“.....Hey, miss.”

“Hee!?”

Turning around, there stood a young girl.

Azami remembered her. She was the girl next to Izaya Orihara in the wheelchair.

“Do you remember me?”

Azami unconsciously nodded in earnest to the expressionless girl’s question.

“Then, this cell phone, you know whom this present came from, right?”

“.....”

Azami accepted the cell phone, and the girl continued the explanation plainly.

“Careful not to get caught by the people in the household. Izaya-san is registered under the name Nakura.”

After pressing the cell phone in her direction, the girl said blood chilling words with a cold gaze.

“It’s better not to throw that away. If you want to work at that household anyway.”

“But.....I think it’s better to not get involved.”

Night Time, At the Night Club Yamibouzu

“What is this, Douma isn’t here?”

The Oukarengou members in the area got startled by Ryuujii Adamura suddenly appearing in the parking space.

“Ryuujii! What is someone from Adamura coming here for?!”

“Do you think you’ll go back unharmed, huh!”

Ignoring the shouts of the members he did not know the names of, Ryuujii called out to one of the giants near the entrance.

“Yo, Tadeura.”

“.....What are you here for?”

Ryuujii showed the leader of the Oukarengou, Tadeura, making an openly unpleasant face a coarse smile.

“Nothing really. I heard you guys were bullied by a weak old man, and thinking you lost a tooth or something I came to by.”

“You bastard.....”

Tadeura’s eyes narrow.

“Don’t mess with us!”

Had he heard a voice?

One of the Oukarengo members lost his temper and moved to take a wooden sword from the trunk of the car.

“Hey, stop! Don’t give in to his provocation! If you do-.....”

Ryuuji spoke over Tadeura’s voice trying to stop him.

“That’s right, the one who killed my brother was really Kiyojima.....would it turn out like that?”

“Tch.....”

“But. You can relax. I didn’t come here to pick a fight. I just came to eat,”

Ryuuji moved his gaze to the hoodlum who had opened the truck to take out the wooden sword while suppressing a laugh.

“So put away such a scary thing.”

In that moment – they noticed. From behind the roof rack where the trucks were parked in the parking space a giant shadow slowly appeared. A large mass like mistaking a truck for a lightweight truck.

Tadeura, who was conceited of himself being a giant, saw the shadow bigger than him and dropped the cigarette that was in his mouth.

“U.....Usubara.”

While everyone was taken aback by the giant, only the young hoodlum that opened the trunk remained unaware. A moment faster than his friends were able to call out to him-Usubara vigorously closed the trunk on both of his arms that attempted to grab the wooden sword.

“Gahaa... Bwaaaa? Aa, aaa!?”

There was the sound of his bones snapping, and the young man gave out a scream with his arms deeply stuck in the trunk.

“.....”

Usubara still wordlessly grabbed the face of the young man screaming and then bashed him against the lid of the trunk while his arms were still halfway trapped in it.

“Gaha”

Along with the distorted voice, the young man lost consciousness.

“Y-you bastaaard!”

All the Oukarengou members around lost their temper, but everyone's expression was unnerved.

“Ryuugi.....What idea was it to even bring the “pet whale,” you bastard!”

Tadeura moved forward figuring he was the only one to be able to stop that massive figure while he stated that.

“I won't let you go further, you half-witted giant!”

Tadeura tries the words he usually says.

While saying that, he tried to hold back his opponent, but –

“Gah.....!?”

He was grabbed by the throat before he could reach and was held up by one hand by Usubara.

“Ngghhhh.....”

Bearing the suffocation desperately, Tadeura was shocked.

– No way! There's no-.....!

– I'm more than 180kg, dammit.....!

He had the confidence to turn over a light motor vehicle, but Tadeura remembered. He recalled legend of when the blue haired giant in front of him encountered a large wild boar that unexpectedly appeared in town. Usubara took the charge of the large boar that was able to turn over even cars with a

front kick, and while the boar recoiled from the hit he picked up a vending machine nearby and then dropped it on the boar, killing it. That legend.

He thought it was just idle gossip, but he felt the pressure from the man in front of him that he could certainly do it.

– Damn.....But I can't let him kick my ass.....

Trying to make some damage on his opponent while held up, he attempted to attack both of his ears with his open hands and crush his eardrums. But he saw through his intent a moment sooner, and with a force like throwing away a garbage bag Tadeura's body was hurled away carelessly.

“Guwaa.....”

“Yeah, I said so right? I didn't come here for a fight. But you charged in, so that's why it's like this.”

While looking down on Tadeura knocked down on the asphalt in agony in front of him, Ryuji continued to chuckle. He then weaved his way through each of the Oukarengou members assembled at the scene. And then a woman completely inappropriate for a place like this appeared.

“What's this~? A fight~? That's boys for you. That's youth.”

Even her speech and conduct was inappropriate for this place, but the gothic, bespectacled girl encouraged the giant Usubara far larger than her before turning towards Ryuji and called out to him.

“Aah, employer-sa~n? Done! We're finished! We tricked the bar owner, but the footage shows him perfectly – that old man! He was pretty amazing! If it wasn't for work, I would roll up my earnings off the hit count if I put it on Youtube with such immediate data!”

“Is that so? I'm looking forward to seeing him.”

“This facility, you know, I was able to process the data from the security cameras with the laptop and connect to the wireless local area network! It was very easy-going, even when stealing the data!”

The deep colored eye shadow under her eyes gave an ill-looking impression. The form of her smiling and wearing glasses with that make-up made the

impression of a hard working office girl who got high all night. Although her gothic clothing completely negated that image.

And then behind the woman, a man with his hair swiped back and sunglasses appeared and spoke to Ryuji.

“There is no more use here. Please return to the car.”

“Why? There was no need for Usubara and I to become decoys.”

After shrugging his shoulders back uninterested, he asked the fallen Tadeura.

“Yo, Tadeura. Between my ‘pet whale’ and that kid Orihara’s old man, who is stronger?”

“.....Who knows. Either one. At least to kill you using only their pinky.....is enough.....”

“I have nothing to do with it. Aah?”

Grinning, Tadeura continued.

“Besides, “my” you say.....? Isn’t the one providing for that “pet whale” your damn father.....? You can’t even give him food.....Gwaa”

“Shuddup!”

Ryuji drove in consecutive kicks into Tadeura’s stomach while yelling.

“Don’t you make fun of me! I! Will inherit! The Adamura family! This town! When that happens there will be no place for you to stay! Remember that! You shit!”

“Let’s stop there and leave him like that. It is a problem to be sued over bodily injuring someone.”

At the words of the man with his hair kept back – Isozaka – Ryuji decided to obey that while clicking his tongue.

“Tch.....Alright.”

As though to calm him from his pouting, Isozaka whispered in Ryuji’s ear.

“We at least know about Izaya Orihara. We cannot show you in front of the Oukarengou, so we will show you the data within the car.”

In the Car

“So, what did you find out?”

Ryuuji pressed Isozaka for information, and he told him while looking at the tablet PC in his hand.

“.....First I will say beforehand, but.....we are still at the stage where we are in a middle of investigating, so there is not much. There is one thing we confirmed about Izaya Orihara that I can tell you.”

Isozaka continued plainly as Ryuuji made a face as though questioning if there was something else to be mentioned.

“The second thing to note is we searched for a person called Izaya Orihara (オリハライザヤ), so in brief we only looked for information on a person that was likely to take actions like what is going on right now. That said, if we were mistaken by the Izaya Orihara (折原臨也) we looked into, there is the possibility of there being another person with that name. After all, we do not see the faces of the usual people in this town.”

“Certainly.....”

“However, we have obtained a photographic portrait, so confirmation should be easy.”

“Seriously?”

It had not even been a half day since he called them up. But for them to obtain even a photographic portrait was beyond Ryuuji’s expectations entirely.

– Naturally they are a group that my father favors.

In the future those connections would become his. From him beginning to think that in his mind the first reasoning of resent to ‘avenge Ryuichi’ was thinning.

The tablet handed over to him displayed the face of a still young man. He was wearing a black fur coat, and his glossy black hair was arranged in a short cut.

“He’s more tall and skinny than I imagined..... Actually, what the hell’s up with this photo?”

The photo seemed to have been taken secretly from far away with a telephoto lens, but he could see crushed guard rails, broken street lights, plain ornamented automobiles that look like something belonging to biker gangs turned over.

“.....Is this from a shot for a movie or something? He certainly has the face for an actor.....”

“Well.....not to that extent. It seems someone who had a grudge against Izaya Orihara took that photo secretly from far away while looking for him.”

“A grudge, huh. So he really has caused riots here and there then.”

Ryuaji commented, reaching an understanding, while Isozaka suggested the next course of action with an indifferent attitude.

“Will you kidnap Douma Kiyojima himself and show him this picture to confirm if it is the actual person himself?”

“.....Don’t say something so dynamic.”

“I will take that as words of praise. If Usubara-san assists I thought at least kidnapping Douma Kiyojima would be a simple matter.”

Isozaka said while looking back in the rear view mirror to the large station wagon following behind them.

“We only ‘listened to your request politely,’ so I thought as long as there are no serious injuries the problem would not become worse than it already is.”

“Is that how it is?”

Naturally that should not be the case, but Ryuaji ended up nodding at Isozaka’s pretty bold statement.

“Well, leave it for now. What kind of person is Izaya Orihara?”

“Yes, first, the kanji is like this.”

While saying this, Isozaka handed Ryuaji the printed data from the mobile printer.

Izaya Orihara (折原臨也). Seeing those characters written, Ryuaji frowned.

“This is read as Izaya?”

“It is a fairly unique reading, so normally it is unreadable. They are fitting characters, are they not? I am impressed it went through the government office.”

“I see....there’s no way anything would come up if you searched that on the net.”

“There appears to be people mistaking the reading as “Rinya.” Actually if you search Rinya Orihara, there are many hits on a community bulletin board in a certain area of Tokyo.”

After giving a redundant explanation, Isozaka moved on plainly.

“Izaya Orihara. He is from Ikebukuro. He says he is twenty-one years old, but his actual age is more than that, so I will tell you once we have a clear age for him. He was from Raijin High School in Ikebukuro, and after graduation he took the name of “informant” and had deep connections with the color gangs and other young uprising gangs in Tokyo city. From this, we deduced this Izaya Orihara (オリハライザヤ) that came to this town and this Izaya Orihara (折原臨也) are the same person.”

“Huh.....”

“From here on out we will be discussing vital matters, so I recommend consulting with your father....”

It was a matter the head of the Adamura family, Jingorou, should know. Putting that on the table beforehand, Isozaka then said his next words.

“Starting from the Awakusu group and Asuki group in Tokyo, he has various connections with the crime syndicates.”

“.....!? Does that mean he has the yakuza backing him?”

“It seems he has made plenty of deals with them for many years, but the specifics of the contents are unknown. There is just the data from various sources that he has connections with the Awakusu group subordinates.”

It seemed this was a much larger issue than he imagined. Ryuji considered the possibility and asked about the named organization, swallowing nervously.

“.....Is that yakuza group a pretty big organization?”

“They are a pretty influential organization in Ikebukuro. They are a central power even among the Medei group’s system appointing the wide area, and you can see they break into the upper ranks. I will tell you upfront, but the Awakusu group is different on a fundamental basis than the scale of your protege organization the Futsuku group.”

“They seem capable of handling conflicts outside the city, but in this town the Futsuku group have more of the advantage. It’s the same with any organization, no matter how big.”

“Yes, and so in order to weaken that power they sent Izaya Orihara.....at least there is that possibility.”

“But for what.....”

“As for the possibility it could be to dig away at the conflict for interests from the redevelopment plans. The scale of the project is one trillion in Japanese yen value. Whether it is permanently or temporarily if they break away at it there is enough value in reaching out from Tokyo. After all, this place is not being backed by other organizations in the area.”

Ryuugi understood what he was talking about. Actually there were even big organizations in the area who came searching for concessions and had meddled in affairs several times over. Either Kiyojima or Adamura would play at the water’s edge of the town, and it should have prevented internal workings as well.

“Izaya Orihara himself is not a member of the group. I cannot state this earnestly, but at most he could be a character in a gang. He has had clients from afar, and it is not impossible to not be caught in his net.”

“You can skip that.....So, this Izaya guy, what can he do?”

“Yes, it seems he has only taken the name as “informant.” Excluding his connections with the crime syndicates, it seems he has made many levels of connections. From the local gang Dragon Zombie to even various religious cult groups from abroad. He had enough information to continue transactions to his wide range of clients. With that other organizations have not disappeared. That is all.”

Shrugging his shoulders, Isozaka gave a bitter smiling saying, “Honestly, we are the ideal type in Candiru.”

“It also seems he has been a consultant to the local collars such as the Dollars and Yellow Scarves. However, it seems a few years ago he was involved in some sort of dispute and disappeared from the front stage. There were rumors he was done in by a Russian killer, so it is urgent to confirm if the one in town right now is indeed him or not.”

“Just what is his aim.....? Do you think he’s really backed by the yakuza in Tokyo?”

“I wonder about that. I can only offer deductions, but although he has made deals with the Awakusu group and the Asuki group I feel it is not appropriate to call him their obvious pawn. It seems the person himself was a man famous for being elusive and no one could read his next moves.”

“.....I’m getting more and more confused. What type of person is he?”

Although he understood his position, he could not imagine his current “hereditary disposition.”

To supply more information to Ryuji, Isozaka continued on with his report.

“His parents work in the trading business, so it seems they are not in Japan that much. He has two younger sisters, but right now they live separately. There are various opinions from people around him. It is a wide range from people who embrace him like a god, people who see him as an enemy of man, to even people who call him a simple flea. Well, you could say all of those are just people on edge (picky).”

He looked at the data in thought and added more.

“There was a period of time where he had a hobby of smashing girls’ cell phones.....so it seems, but this is uncertain information. If you take into account it being rumors.”

“With that kind of rumor being gossiped about he’s quite the creep~.”

As Nec was cackling in the passenger’s seat Ryuji Adamura’s cell phone rang.

“Hmm? For me.....?It’s a number I don’t know.Hello.”

Taking out the cell phone while frowning, an unknown voice came into Adamura's ear.

[Hey, nice to meet you. Are you Ryuji Adamura?]

“....Who the hell are you?”

[Oh my, I heard you were looking for me, so I thought you would at least know my voice. Did I overestimate the guys from Candiru a little bit?]

The sound registered in Ryuji's mind. Reaching an enlightenment on who the speaker was, he uttered the name with a forced smile.

“You’re.....Izaya Orihara?”

At that, Isozaka sitting next to him twitched, and even Nec in the passenger's seat stopped typing on her laptop.

[Correct! That's good. You have at least that much guessing ability.]

“You’re making fun of me, you -.....”

[It's not like that. To make fun of the successor of the Adamura family is unthinkable! After all no matter your personal capabilities you'll become a person worthy to be feared by even idiots just by being a member of the Adamura family.]

It was a fairly straight way of provocation pointing out “you yourself are powerless.” Ryuji understood that meaning right away and threw the cell phone without a thought at the front glass of the car.

“O-Hee”

Giving a cry that was not very cry-like, Nec embraced her laptop so the cell phone would not bounce back onto it. The durable cell phone fell below immediately, and so there were no injuries to the driver or Nec. There was a slight crack in the front glass, and with the impact the battery fell out and thus automatically cut the call.

“Please calm down. You’ll doing what he expects.”

“As if I can calm down! He made you Candiru guys fools too.....You aren’t even gathering to voice against it, huh! Aren’t you pissed being made fun of like that!

Aah?"

"That is hard to say."

Isozaka shrugged his shoulders while keeping a calm, imitated tone.

His eyes narrowed, and he told Ryuaji.

"The problem is not that we were insulted, but the truth that we were looking into him.....he knows that."

"Aah.....?"

"The connections to Candiru of the personnel investigating in Tokyo are erased ostensibly. Even so, it is a huge deal that he knows we are making a move so fast. Or he may have tricked us. It would have been a great disaster if you answered with "why do you know of Candiru," so that is thanks to your nerve."

"Oh? Y-yeah."

He did not intent to evade a trick, but not allowing to be made fun of by his ally he instead affirmed the statement. Without realizing that he was being made fun of by Isozaka and Nec from the start.

".....Hey, can't you reverse track that call just now?"

Ryuaji proposed something unreasonable.

"It is possible if we threaten them with a grasp on more than half of the weaknesses of the employees from that particular communications company, but I think if you report even one person to the police then you who was contacted would also be caught. Either way, right now it is impossible."

"Damn. What the hell. Can't use it, huh....."

"If we try to make contact, I think it would be important for us to make the call, though?"

".....I got it."

Clicking his tongue, he took the cell phone Nec picked up and inserted the battery.

At the same time he activated it there were several missed calls all from the

same number.

“It would help if you could put it on speaker so we can hear it as well.”

“I got it, I got it.”

After he set it to speaker phone as according to Isozaka’s directions, Ryuaji called the number in the missed calls history. And then the line connected without even a few seconds passing.

[Hey. Thank goodness. I thought you blocked me.]

“I would like to do that very much though. What do you want?”

[Ah, I thought of dealing information with you personally. You already know that I’m an “informant” right?]

Ryuaji squinted as Izaya chatted with him brazenly.

“.....You think you are in a position to do that, huh.....? Actually, who did you get my number from?”

[The origin of the information is a secret. Of course there’s no way I would let out the information bought from you or the source. Though for that you have no choice but to believe in that.]

“You think we don’t know anything about you?”

[Now what do you mean?]

“You have two cute little sisters, don’t you?Orihara.....Bu....nagare.....? Kyuu..... how the hell do you read these?”

He looked at the data on Izaya’s family he was given to by Isozaka. He tried to read the names, but he could not read it as he thought it would be without the furigana.

[Ahahahahaha! That’s right! I have them, sisters! Sorry, the kanji is difficult so you can’t read them, right! When I see my dad next I’ll tell him: that the heir of the Adamura group had to lose face because of his naming sense!]

Once again he was succumbing to the force of wanting to throw the cell phone, but being watched by Isozaka’s cold eyes beside him Ryuaji forcibly cooled down his temper.

“You won’t have the chance to meet your dad....No, how about I send you to that world so you may be able to meet him.....? What do you think will happen to those cute sisters of yours?”

[I don’t care. Do as you please.]

“Don’t try to act tough.”

[You know, Ryuji-kun. Do you think a human who cares for their family enough to worry if they become hostages would behave like this, do such activities with their real name, and make enemies with people like you or Kiyojima-san?]

They were words with persuasive power with nothing more to add to the comment, but Ryuji raised his voice on another matter that caught his attention.

“You bastard! Why does that Douma get the *san*, and I get *kun*!”

[Age difference, I guess? That’s no good. You have to pay your respects to those older than you.]

“Shuddup! You’re 21 though! You’re one below me, aren’t you!”

[Oh my, you know that is what I call myself and that my real age is more than that, right? That’s no good. You have to sincerely listen to the words from the guys in Candiru that you hired.]

His face contorted and he opened his mouth wordlessly, but Isozaka continued with a sigh.

“Is this fine? Izaya Orihara-san. I am of the Futsuku group’s -”

Since it was a conversation on speaker phone, Isozaka’s voice reached through to Izaya. Though he attempted to give a fake name, a well mannered voice came out from the speakers of the cell phone.

[Well now, nice to meet you! It’s a great honor to talk with the subordinate of Canidru Isozaka-san! Then that means next to you is the information processor Inari-san too?]

Izaya Orihara confirmed his name before Isozaka could. Ryuji was surprised, but he tilted his head at the last words.

“Who’s Inari?”

At that from the passenger seat Nec stated as though to place a hex.

“.....Stop calling me by my real name.”

[I think it’s a nice name though? Hisae Inari-san. If you change the reading, it’d be Inari zu.....]

“.....I’ll kill you?”

Perhaps there was some kind of trauma. Nec had apparent killing intent from the gleam of her glasses and a penetrating chilling voice. Ryuaji felt the serious chill of her words for a woman younger than him and fell silent to frantically avoid seeing that behavior.

[Right, sorry, sorry. I only teased, but I don’t feel like making enemies with you. I only want to have business is all.]

“Business.....?”

[Yeah, that’s right Ryuaji-kun. I have a lot of things to ask about your older brother Ryuichi-san.]

“.....My brother?”

Ryuaji narrowed his eyes.

What does he want to know of his already dead brother?

Even though there was the possibility he killed his brother in the first place.

While Ryuaji thought over those thoughts, he seemed to have only more questions than anger so he decided to wait for the other to continue.

And then Izaya cheerfully mentioned something strange.

[There was a time your brother temporarily got along with Douma Kiyojima-san, right? Do you know the cause of the fight and breakup after the fact?]

“.....Ah, well, who knows.”

He did not mention it aloud, but Ryuaji knew. He tried to make a move on Douma’s sister Nana, and so it turned into a fight like that of a death match.

The fact his brother was some pervert attacking a girl was a shame of the

Adamura household so it was not talked about much, but the people in town that knew of that know: it was not information worthy to cause an uproar over.

[Do you know even the details from after all that?]

“.....What do you mean?”

[Well, that's fine. What I want to ask is the human relations surrounding Ryuichi-san. I want you to tell me in detail from the perspective of an insider like yourself as much as you can.]

“.....You think I'd tell you?”

Just who is saying something like asking for a collaboration at this pace?

Thinking he was messing around with him, just before Ryuji could try to yell at him Izaya piped up with a sonorous voice.

[Of course, I'm not saying it has to be for free! How about I offer you information too!]

“.....What information?”

Taken in by the other's strong words, he unconsciously asked back.

And then Izaya gave one piece of information in a fairly quick manner.

Really shamelessly and without any timidity –

“The information that your younger brother and Kiyojima-san's daughter Nana are trying to leave the town together.”

Interlude: The Man Called Izaya Orihara ④

Izaya Orihara.....

Like hell I know that flea! Piss off!

– *Extracted from a testimony of man H, rumored to be Izaya Orihara's natural enemy*

Translation Notes:

1. If a character does not know how to write Izaya's name it's usually written in katakana instead of kanji. In this case in Isozaka's explanation, it is also to show the possibility of it being another Izaya they don't know about if they are mistaken. I just wanted to show how the meaning slightly changes a bit with the different usages of kana and Kanji.
And yes, although not a common name (written with those characters), the most common reading of it is most definitely "Rinya." I read it that way too the first time without seeing the furigana. Rinya is also generally a girl's name, by the way. So the way his name is read is really unusual, and many characters are surprised the name was accepted by the government office.
2. Her name is written as 井鳴寿枝. Inari is a type of sushi, and the first character in her first name "hisae" (寿枝) is also the first character for "sushi." (寿司) So change the last character, her name can be read "inarizushi" (since the last names are given first in Japanese).

四章

折原臨也を始末せよ



Chapter 4: Get Rid of Izaya Orihara

A Few Days Later Bunokura City, the Entertainment District

– I feel like the city is quite noisy somehow.

Koshino of the Futsuku group was walking around town by himself when he was attacked by a strange feeling. Somehow, compared the usual he felt a harsh air drifting through the city. However, Koshino had an idea about the one cause of it.

Kazuhisa Adamura and Nana Kiyojima had disappeared. That impactful truth was being spread around. But it was difficult to say if they had left the city.

As the rumors stand, after both subordinates of Kiyojima and Adamura have begun a lookout for them at the entrances and exits of the city as there were eye-witness reports of the two. Although the two were not walking around together, it indicated that both were still in the city and alive. It was likely they were proceeding with their preparations to leave the city or they had taken notice of the lookout around town were being cautious. It was not only the people working at the train stations. They seemed to have taken measures to contact even the taxi company within the city and distributed photographic portraits of the two.

He had thought it would be just a matter of time until they were caught, but- perhaps they were being shielded by someone but no one knew their whereabouts and the days of occasional eye-witness reports continued.

– Kiyojima is making a ruckus saying some Adamura kid deceived him, while the young master Ryuji is making a fuss saying “Kazuhisa is a traitor! Crush him!” Seriously, they really are giving us more excessive work at this kind of time.

– Well, circumstances are circumstances. I can understand the feeling of wanting to run away from this kind of town.

Walking around town while giving a sigh, he caught the face of someone he knew.

It was the corrupt detective Sasazaki.

“Hey, sir.”

“A-, aah. It’s you, huh.”

He thought Sasazaki averting his gaze was suspicious, but he unconsciously squinted when he caught glimpse of two children around elementary school age in front of him. After the children realized he was looking at them and departed saying, “well then, see you later! Mister!” Koshino questioned Sasazaki.

“.....Who are they?”

“Hm? Ah.....Those children are a relative’s kids. Those kids skipped school again today and were wandering around town when I was about to tell them off.”

That’s a lie, Koshino confirmed.

The behavior of the man in front of him was suspicious, but early he had been dragged somewhere by the two in the first place. Besides he clearly remembered he did not see him ‘tell the relative’s children off.’

“.....Is that so?”

However, without pressing into the matter deeper he asked another question on something else.

“Somehow the town seems a bit tense, but do you have any idea why that is, sir?”

And then Sasazaki after he exhaled an exclamation of understanding answered in turn.

“There’s that redevelopment plans for this town, right? It seems the quarrel over the concession rights has gotten pretty intense. Guess there’s suspicious guys from other cities like the yakuza and religious cult groups gathering around.”

“.....I haven’t heard of it.”

“You guys on the bottom have not been told yet. Even I was unaware until I

heard from the chief. Actually, Kiyojima and Adamura were told from the chief, so you guys should hear about it soon."

".....The boss of the police protecting the public order of the city is just a big opportunist then?"

Sasazaki shook his head seeing Koshino's shocked attitude.

"That's just the wise thing to do. For the young chief it's a seat until he gets promoted and returns to headquarters. It's the right answer to sell connections without causing discord on both sides."

"Having a wise chief protect the town makes me so happy I could cry."

"Don't say that. That chief is currently in a dilemma with another matter....Ah, that's right, I remember."

While turning aside the cynical joke, Sasazaki cut into another topic.

"I'll ask just to make sure, but.....Have you heard any rumors involving the case of Ryuichi Adamura's death?"

"What is this so suddenly? I have heard harsh rumors it was the work of that Kiyojima though."

".....Well, this is restricted information, but since I'm getting some pocket money from you I'll give you a touch of the content."

"?"

While patting the shoulders of a doubtful Koshino Sasazaki drew close to his ears and said.

"The culprit who killed Ryuichi Adamura may turn up soon."

"Haa.....Haa!?"

Koshino's eyes widened in surprise.

He thought that was going to be treated as a suicide instead of a case and left unsolved. On top of that, he only knew the chief was an opportunist. He did not understand the reason to make waves like this.

– No, wait a minute.

At that point Koshino made a guess.

Perhaps they confirmed the culprit had no connection to Kiyojima or Adamura and it was the work of a crazed killer or something? If that is the case, I can take that.

However that conjecture was turned down by Sasazaki's next words.

".....If you don't want to get pulled in you should run from town today. It'll get crazy."

Sweat was dripping from his cheeks as Sasazaki said this, and he kept an eye on the area around them, cautious of having this conversation heard by others. In contrast to what he was saying, he deduced it was something serious enough for him to not care of them talking together.

"You got it? The chief by all rights should have erased that. It seems the culprit will be leaked to the media. If we don't arrest him before that it'll become something where the closeness between the police and the influential powers of this town will be questioned. I won't say more than that. I just gave you a warning."

Watching Sasazaki departing after saying that quickly, Koshino's face conforsted as he muttered.

"What the hell.....Just what is happening in this town?"

Evening – The royal suite of the Bunokura Grand Palace Hotel

"I guess it's about time. I have a good feeling for today."

Izaya said while looking over the city, fidgeting like a child. Looking at Izaya watching out the window from his wheelchair, Sozoro spoke in chastise.

"For Izaya-dono 'a good feeling' for you would mean hell for other human beings."

"In that manner of speaking, it would be a bit rude in the instance of a murderer who takes pleasure in killing."

Shrugging his shoulders, Izaya faced Sozoro and started talking of himself.

"For me, Sozoro-san. I like to see the sight of a human happy from the bottom

of his heart when he wins the lottery. I really enjoy seeing that happiness when until that point that person just had a mediocre life and then suddenly changes to the extraordinary. However, I like seeing those with that ordinary life and those who ruin themselves with money both equally. It's just I only occasionally get to see those times where one takes the path of their own self-destruction."

"And of those occasions, I think you are quite the devil."

"In that case, there is occasionally a time where one will be shown the way towards happiness, you know? Well, objectively speaking there is no way to measure happiness, so perhaps there are people who enjoy seeing others' lives in ruin. I can respect those type of humans too. I can also accept a lot of perversion. If that is part of how humans behave."

"Not loving anyone means the same thing as not loving anybody.....that is what someone has said before."

Sozoro continued in indifference and sarcasm. Haruto spoke up, standing from behind him.

"Sozoro-ojiichan! Are you bullying Izaya-san?"

"Now-now, I'm not doing that sort of thing. It's just that you, Haruto, must not become like the type of human Izaya-dono is, alright?"

"Why?"

Tilting his head in disapproval, Sozoro answered plainly.

"The ones who can become like Izaya-dono is just Izaya-dono. You are free to look up to him, but if you try to impersonate him it will only lead into destroying yourself. Even if you sought a path without loosing yourself, you will simply just stop being human. You would become a monster."

"That's fine! If it's to become like Izaya-san, even if I was no longer human, I-"

"No."

What interrupted Haruto was the rare, stern voice from Izaya.

"I-Izaya-san....."

"Haruto-kun, the reason why I can love you, Himari-chan, Sozoro-san, and all

other kinds of people is because you are all human. I don't like people who threw away their humanity and their self. Still, I prefer monsters who try to be human than that."

Whether there was some sort of existence like that he was thinking of, Izaya stared off distantly as he said that.

"But I.....I just want to be like you."

"Why is that?"

Without breaking his smile – a broken smile – Haruto said to Izaya,

"If I become a person who knows everything like you, I think I would have been able to help have Himari's dad get back along with dad."

"....."

"When mom started acting strange.....I didn't know what to do.....But if it was you, I think you would have known what to do. So if I become like you! Become a person who knows anything! If I can do that, then I will know how to make everyone get along!"

The young boy said while smiling.

Izaya knew. That while it seemed that the boy's heart was open, it was indeed closed; blindingly believing in him, trying desperately to support his own broken heart.

"....."

From the corner of the room, Himari quietly listened to Haruto's and Izaya's conversation. When she looked at Izaya, there were times she looked at him with a cold gaze, and sometimes she would look at him with killing intent.

"Himari-chan, you come too. The town looks great."

".....Fine."

Himari said with the cold attitude she usually took.

Unlike Haruto, she internationally kept a far gap between her and Izaya. Izaya knew. That she was aware of everything. But while knowing everything, while knowing he was in the place to stop her father's murder, Izaya did nothing. And

that young girl, Himari, knew all that. Because he considered him as his best friend, the man was murdered by that best friend. That was Himari's father. Izaya just offered the desired information, even though he knew everything.

If Himari's father were to say, 'I want to know why my best friend did such a thing,' Izaya would have told him why without hesitation. The compromise of the friend's dispute – that would be what Izaya would call a beautiful outcome. But that did not happen. That was all there was to it.

Izaya left it on that, and he enjoyed that part of the outcome from beginning to end. He just respected the other party's chosen path and did no more than push his back. The one who made that choice was Himari's father.

Naturally, Izaya understood that from an ordinary person's perspective he would be seen as evil. Even so, Izaya would not change his stance in regards to it. For Izaya, he could accept hatred towards him and acts of faith towards him like words of love. And so, it could be said it was the same for this city.

"Say, Sozoro-san. Do you think there will be a day sometime when I can move around freely?"

Izaya suddenly asked Sozoro standing beside him. After giving Izaya a glare, Sozoro said,

"If Izaya-dono desires so, you probably could, right? Have the doctor's said the same?"

".....Again, they said if the day comes when I want on my own will to move around."

"I have not been told anything, and I am quite completely indifferent on the matter. However, from those who have no hope of an expected recovery, you can decide on your next course of action depending on your mood, so there is nothing to talk yourself into accepting the blasphemy of medical treatment."

While giving the uninterested Sozoro a bitter smile, Izaya continued speaking, half to himself.

"I wonder about that, after all what I need to get healed isn't my legs. It's probably a mental illness."

“My, could it be you just figured that out?”

“Don’t say it like that. I quite understand that I’m not normal. But even so, I can’t quite stop it. I at least accepted this much, but the next time I slip up.....I have a premonition that I will probably lose my life.”

As Izaya looked out on the city, he was reminded of his home town in Tokyo.

“It’s so ironic. I talked about the monster-like person I lost to, right?”

“Yes, I have heard one of Izaya-dono’s specialty, sinister plans fully rebounded, and you lost miserably.”

“I won’t deny it. What’s so ironic is that I lost to that monster’s humanity.”

Although he stated it as though reminiscing the past, his expression held no anger or smile; he was just completely expressionless.

“If that monster killed me, then he would truly become a monster. To me that was my win. I, who loves humans, would be killed by a monster. That in of itself should have been a satisfactory end. But that didn’t happen. Thanks to the monster’s habits, the monster was able to make human friends. Really trustworthy friends. And those humans, stopped that monster. And so.....I lost.”

As though somewhere the evil spirit had fallen, Izaya continued to speak.

“Because I never tried to look at the human parts of that monster, I lost.”

Watching Izaya laugh of his own self derision, Sozoro began to speak after giving it a bit of thought.

“I think that if you can heal your body, you will be able to do the same things as before.”

“.....Perhaps.”

“However, I do not think that the result will be the same. That is being the case that Izaya-dono can really look at people in the real sense.”

“No way, Sozoro-san. Isn’t that like saying that I’m not looking at people in the real sense?”

He replied with a joke, though Sozoro added nothing in return.

After shaking his head in disappointment, Izaya slowly began to move his

wheelchair. And while looking at the mansion at the base of the mountain – the Adamura residence – he spoke. He stated with a cold smile that seemed to lower the temperature of the area around him without feeling the fragments of his human nature (weakness) that he just showed previously.

“Now, let’s be heading off now. To watch the end of this town.”

The Police Station, the Chief’s Office

The time goes back slightly.

“There’s no way that.....the Adamura guys are protecting them, right?”

“Ha-no, I do not think they are that quick tempered.”

While wiping off the sweat with a handkerchief, the police chief answered the visitor sitting on the couch, Munenori Kiyojima.

“Then why have you not found my daughter yet?”

“If you send in a disappearing notice we would be able to move as according to the investigation.....”

“I can’t do something so shameful! For the daughter of Kiyojima to elope with that Adamura’s kid! If I could put it out as a kidnapping I would give a damage report right away.”

“Th-that is quite.....”

It was certain that with his daughter disappearing Kiyojima’s composure was cracked.

“.....Actually it is possible for Adamura to have used unyielding methods, and I can think of the reason for that. They may pretend to have eloped and kidnapped Nana.”

“The reason is?”

“.....Guarantee this conversation is kept to only this place.”

“N-naturally!”

Kiyojima said to the nodding chief.

“Adamura’s mine is drying up. I already have a grasp on the evidence and

collected it just a few hours ago.”

“Wha.....”

Kiyojima fearlessly smiled at the surprised police chief.

“I plan on making an announcement and hint at that today during the greeting at the *gathering*. I can’t wait to see how Adamura will come out from that. If he moves in a hurry that’ll be good. If he doesn’t make a move, then I only have to proceed in repainting the influential chart following that.”

The gathering.

It was a party with the corporations related to the redevelopment plans taking place in the banquet hall of the city’s largest hotel the Bunokura Grand Palace. As a place to exchange information it was open once a month, but-the get-together this time would be a third year anniversary of launching the project plans, and so it would open with a slightly larger scope than normal.

There was also the possibility of the media from local newspapers or local television stations to be there. Kiyojima did not look that far into it, but he at least thought them being there would be beneficial for him.

– I want to clearly declare that the “mine is dried up,” but it’ll be a problem if they question how I gained the evidence.

While thinking that, Kiyojima thought of one other issue that was troubling him.

“.....By the way, chief. Do you know anything about a man called Izaya Orihara?”

“It seems like he is hiding in this city, but....right now it seems the Adamura side are in a frenzy looking for him, but they are coming up short-handed.”

“Is that so. After all he is the villain who kidnapped and confined my son. For the peace of the city you better remove him as soon as possible.”

“Yes?”

The chief tilted his head, confused.

“You will not send a damage report?”

“It’ll depend on the value of its use. If I can eliminate Adamura or make him a pawn, then what is an ordinary informant worth? There’s no way I should leave someone with the possibility of knowing my secrets out and about. Depending on the amount of coin involved he’ll leak my information to others. It’ll be a problem for someone to solicit my son’s scandals.”

“That may be the case.”

Kiyojima said to the chief while averting his gaze.

“Tell me when you know where he is. Tell me if he has found even me. Either way, I plan to send out a damage report once I know his whereabouts.”

“.....Once again another ‘accidental death’ will be added to the list in this town.”

“.....It’ll be troubling to mix it up, but even if the “accidents” with those reporters were “cases” the culprit was part of the Adamura’s side. You understand?”

Kiyojiima said to emphasize it.

The various *accidents* in the past were incidents that happened during the previous police chief’s run. He did not know what this new police chief thought of those, but it was not necessary to verify that. He was certain this man was already his dog.

“Of course. Although eradicating the accidents means it is unavoidable that the humans lived.”

The chief answered with a pathetic smile mixed with a bit of fear as he pat down his cheeks with a handkerchief.

Kiyojima confirming that, without showing it on his face, snickered.

Kiyojima told one lie to the chief. He already knew the whereabouts of Izaya Orihara.

He had told the chief, ‘it seems my son was taken somewhere blindfolded,’ but in actuality he knew he was in the suite room of the Bunokura Grand Palace where the gathering would be held today.

– According to Douma an old man named Sozoro was some kind of monster,

but.....

– Well, naturally that is the talk from young kids of a gang. They are no match against a professional.

There was already someone left on watch on the floor of the hotel's suite room. It was possible to kidnap him after pushing out Adamura when Izaya Orihara left the hotel or when the man Sozoro opened the room. If there was any indicator of them trying to escape before that time he had made instructions to hold them there.

In the case they did not leave he could utilize the police. It would be fine for Douma to testify that the old man set fire to a facility. Naturally the old man would not be so much of a fool to make an enemy of the police.

Kiyojima thought that and chuckled in his mind, then stood slowly from the sofa.

“Now then, I’ll be going now. Adamura’s face will be a sight to see.”

Munenori Kiyojima acknowledged that the informant Izaya Orihara was skilled.

But that was it.

Certainly his abilities to have grasped the circumstances of the Adamura mine is considerable, but he did not think of appointing such a rootless man moving on his own personal interests after this. If someone considered the possibility of those superior skills being used against him it would be better to further proceed with his elimination sooner.

A simple, superior informant did not frighten him. That was what Kiyojima thought. And that informants were sneaky-thieves concealing themselves while infiltrating other's computers and steal their data.

And so he headed towards the Bunokura Grand Palace boldly.

Towards the place an unfamiliar *informant* was at in the suite room overhead.

Evening Adamura Residence

“We know Izaya Orihara’s location.”

“Finally.”

Ryuuji Adamura lifted up his face happily at Isozaka’s report.

Ryuuji underwent various *information exchanges* while taking the call with Izaya Orihara, but perhaps the man Izaya was surprisingly cautious but he did not make a move to meet with him face-to-face. However, Ryuuji immediately following the exchange of information had become more watchful of the dangerous existence that was Izaya Orihara.

“That guy knows way too much. It wouldn’t be strange whenever he comes over to demand something.”

“You have the choice to wait until then and leave it to the police though?”

“You saying I should owe the police? The current chief is a guy who is fine to jump on any opportunity to even work with Kiyojima. More than that, where is that Izaya guy?”

Ignoring Isozaka’s proposal Ryuuji pressed him for the crucial report.

“That is a bit problematic.”

“Problematic?”

“Yes, currently he is in the suite room of the Bunokura Grand Palace.”

“Haa!? Isn’t that the tallest place in the city!?”

Isozaka continued, mentioning to the doubtful Ryuuji plainly.

“Yes, there was a report from Tokyo saying, ‘he likes high places,’ but I cannot believe he chose such heights to hide himself at.”

“.....Wait a sec. The Bunokura Grand Palace....Isn’t my father going there today?”

“Yes. The gathering should begin soon. Since it is such a crucial juncture Kiyojima should be attending as well.”

“So that’s the ‘problematic’ part. Just what would that old guy Sozoro or whatever do to my old man?”

Ryuuji thought mainly of his father, but brushing aside his feelings it was the selfishness of ‘if I lose him now I’ll be in trouble.’ Consequently it would be a

problem if something happened to a third party. He did think with so many influential people gathered in one place like this get-together no one would not attack anyone, but he could not definitely state that for certain upon hearing Isozaka's and Nec's report now.

And then as though to back Ryuji's anxiety, Isozaka informed him.

"No, the problematic issue is another matter."

"What?"

"Starting from the floor of the suite room there are countless numbers of people working under Munenori Kiyojima around the premises of the hotel."

".....Aah?"

Kiyojima had Izaya Orihara under watch and had people stationed to kidnap him depending on the circumstances. However looking at it from the Adamura's perspective it was taken as a completely different meaning.

"So he really is teamed up with Kiyojima then. If they are just guards that's fine, but if they are pawns to attack my dad.....?"

"I do not think mister Kiyojima is that foolish."

"He's enough of an idiot to oppose the Adamuras."

Ryuji's words were not sarcastic; they were serious.

Isozakan sensing that he hid his true feelings, nodded with an affirmation with a simple, 'that is true,' while thinking in his mind 'at any rate when he takes over it will be the end of the Adamura family.'

"Have Usubara head to the hotel.Well, he stands out though. We can't have him enter the assembly hall where the gathering is held, so have him wait in the parking space."

Ryuji gave the orders while thinking of what he should do next, but then there was someone calling his name.

"Um, Ryuji-sama."

Turning around there stands one of the maids.

"Ahh.....Was it Niimura or Niiyama?"

“It is Niiyama. I am Azami Niiyama.”

The maid quickly bowed and lowered her head.

“What is it? We’re a bit busy here.”

Since the maids usually did not talk to him Ryuaji tilted his head in confusion.

Azami made an anxious face and spoke to Ryuaji with her voice half shaking.

“The truth is.....I had a call from Kazuhisa-sama on my cell phone.”

“.....Kazuhisa did? Why would he send that to a maid like you?”

Azami told Ryuaji, frowning.

“Yes.....Since Kazuhisa came to this household I took care of him on a day-to-day basis, so, um....I think I am trusted by Kazuhisa-sama.....”

Azami cast her eyes downward as she hesitantly said this. It looked like a declaration of intention that she would betray that trust.

“Since he is hiding the young lady of the Kiyojima family, he said he wants me to bring a change of clothes from his room and.....his bankbook and seal for the bank to their hideout.....”

“.....You really turned on him. I give you credit for that.”

“Y-yes.”

The maid turned her head downward in fear of Ryuaji who was giving her a crude smile.

“So? Where is their hideout?”

“It is the former tunnel in the Bunokura mountain. It seems they are waiting for the chance to slip out of the city through there.”

After that Ryuaji decided to call for several members of the Futsuku group to head over to that place directly and stop his brother. Usubara would head to the hotel. He had the disposition to think he himself was enough to immobilize Kazuhisa.

Isozaka addressed Ryuaji preparing to depart.

“Please be careful. You do not know what cornered people would do.”

“The mouse would bite the cat back, you mean? Unfortunately I’m not a cat but a dragon. I’ll thoroughly burn that bastard mouse to nothing.”

“.....”

After Ryuubi briefly glanced back at Isozaka not saying anything before he asked curiously.

“Where’s that gothic girl? She’s *Inari Sushi*, right?”

“If she herself heard that, she would have killed you.”

“I’m just beating her at her own game. It’s fun to see what face that tiresome woman would make if I smashed that laptop she types on to pieces in front of her.”

Sending a cold stare at the guffawing Ryuubi, Isozaka gave the answer to his question disinterestedly.

“She is currently in the middle of working on another job. It is a request from Jingorou-sama.”

“From dad....? Well whatever. Either way, I’m going to crush Izaya too. That’ll be the end of your job.”

For Ryuubi that was his intent in wanting to end the job with Candiru as soon as possible. Without a doubt they were efficient, but he felt they fell inferior to Izaya Orihara, and more importantly their daily pay was absurdly high. To the extent of wasting and throwing away money.

Ryuubi thought that and announced the end of their contract orally then left from the estate with the Futsuku group men.

Isozaka, left behind, returned to his car, and while starting the engine he took out his cell phone and made a call to somewhere.

“.....Hello, is it the president?Yes, the job went smoothly. I will collect Nec and leave the city.”

After reporting to his superior he said with a bitter smile.

“Yes, I was lucky to not have been asked to go along to the former tunnel.”

“I do not want to die yet after all.”

In Hagane City An Internet Cafe

“Hahahaha ho~. Hahahaha ho ho~”

In the Hagane city – a neighbor to Bunokura city with little intermingling.

In a private room of an internet cafe at a corner Nec typed away on her laptop while slightly humming. Looking at the countless pieces of information moving on the screen she nodded in satisfaction and laughed.

“Thank goodness~. The preparations are done in time.”

“After that it’s just waiting on the actual person to decide their resolve. Hee hee. How exciting~.”

Bunokura Grand Palace, the Underground Parking Space

In a spacious underground parking lot below the hotel. The parking garage was a massive underground space with a three layer structure to park hundreds of vehicles on the first floor probably since the entertainment district and nearby hotels both utilize it.

In the corner of such a place Izaya and Sasazaki met up.

“.....This is the last information I’ll give you. Confirm that.”

While Sasazaki cautiously looked around the area he handed Izaya the micro data card.

“Honestly, I crossed a pretty dangerous bridge, you know? If it gets out that I took and leaked out data on investigations I won’t be just hired.....at worst I’d go to prison.”

“That’s why you’re running away right?”

“W-well yeah.....But what will you use it for? That investigation data is *such an old case.....*”

“There’s many ways I can put it to use. Well, it’d be great for you to not pry into it very much, so here’s the amount for that.”

As he said this Izaya handed over multiple thick envelopes. Behind him there were two children and an elderly man waiting, and perhaps they did not have interest but they did not add anything into the conversation.

Confirming the contents, Sasazaki saw there was roughly a few hundred million in them.

“Heh, heh.....Thanks.”

It was a cheap price for him where it would not cover spending his money freely for life, but either way if he did not run away his life itself would be in danger.

Sasazaki put the envelopes in his pocket and then tried to leave from there, but upon seeing a large van parked near the entrance of the parking space he concealed himself by a nearby pillar.

“What’s wrong?”

At Izaya’s question Sasazaki answered while turning pale.

“Th-that van.....I remember it.”

Peeking around silently while holding his breathe, the face of a large giant appeared from the van.

“Oh, that’s impressive.....He is a head or two taller than a Russian I know.”

Sasazaki said to Izaya saying that with a easygoing tone.

“Listen, quickly hide! It’s the Futsuku group’s Usubara!”

Since they were still far off they appeared to have gone unnoticed. Sasazaki proclaimed it in a small voice at Izaya, then a boy behind him cheerfully pushed his wheelchair and all of them concealed themselves behind the pillar.

“I know the rumors. He is the ‘feudal lord’s pet whale,’ right?”

“Yeah, that guy is bad news. He’s a monster able to lift a vending machine.”

“.....A vending machine?”

Hearing that term Izaya stiffened.

Sasazaki saw that behavior and frowned, thinking it was a rare reaction for the man.

– Yeah, well, normally no one would believe that sort of talk.

He came to a conclusion on his own, but then Izaya asked him with an

apprehensive expression.

“Picking up the vending machine.....how far can he throw it?”

“Eh?”

“Like I said, I’m wondering how far he can throw it. If it was from there to here, do you think it would reach?”

“No way, no, no. There’s no way it would reach! He would just drop it roughly where he is!”

What is this man thinking? Sasazaki answered with that attitude.

At that Izaya whispered as though he was provided sudden relief.

“That’s good.....so within the category of humans then.”

“?”

“Sorry, this is a personal trauma of mine. Please don’t pay mind to it.”

It was impossible to do so even when told not to worry, but Sasazaki looked around the area more concerned with just Usubara at the moment. Usubara was slowly walking towards the entrance of the hotel. In short he was heading towards where they were.

– This isn’t good. Did he come to look for Izaya Orihara? If that’s the case being seen with him would be no.....good.....?

In the middle of thinking that Sasazaki noticed.

From another direction there were ten others moving towards them.

– The Futsuku group.....?

– N-no, I feel like the mood is different.....

– Who are they.....?

Before the answer would arrive for his question the men surround them.

“You’re Izaya Orihara, right.”

“No? I’m Nakura. I’m a retired person from a chirimen crêpe textile store.”

“You messing with us?”

“I’m relatively serious. I want an appeal of a harmless existence....but well, I guess that’s impossible.”

And then one of the men caught sight of Usubara walking on the opposite side.

“Usubara.....?”

As though he waited for that timing, Izaya yelled.

“Usubara-sa~n! Thank goodness! Over here, over here!”

Each person in the area widened their eyes in surprise and alternate between looking at Izaya and Usubara.

– Wh-what is this idiot!?

Sasazaki looked over at Izaya in shock, but then he realized.

–What.

– Where did the two kids go?

The boy and girl disappeared at some point.

Sasazaki searched around and then saw two children peaking around from behind a pillar. They were grasping the lever for a small fire extinguisher and sprayed the mysterious group and Usubara in white, fine powder.

“!?”

“Gwaaa!” “You.....what.....Hey!” “My eyes! My eyes! Geha....”

Usubara covered his eyes with his hand while the men surrounding Izaya were hit in the eyes or throat and stood where they were writhing.

At that moment, Izaya yelled.

“Ahahaha! Did you think I moved alone? Thinking I am a lone wolf with no one backing me! Right, Usubara-san! It’s laughable!”

Sozoro was already pushing his wheelchair and moved him to a place away from the mist of the fire extinguisher.

Sasazaki noticed.

The meaning of the contents of Izaya’s yell just now.

From Usubara's perspective he would hear those words of provocation towards himself. He should not realize the men that came after also being sprayed with the particles of the fire extinguisher.

On the other hand, from the perspective of the men they would take it as Izaya was well-acquainted with Usubara and would hear those words of provocation as though directed to themselves.

And just like that the situation was easily in Izaya's palm.

"You bastard....Where are yooou!"

It seemed one of them finally recovered his eyesight and was proceeding forward with his hands outstretched to wipe away the smoke.

And then a massive hand reached out from within the white smoke and took a hold of the man's head.

"U-Usuba.....raaaaa!?"

He then was hurled away with one hand and collided into several of his comrades before hitting the floor.

"Damn! Call for reinforcements!"

"It's the Futsuku group! The Futsuku group made a move!"

"Kill him! It's just Usubara! Surround him!"

The men who regained their vision fully let out a cry.

"-----"

Usubara gave a roar like that of a beast, seized the heads of the men individually and threw them.

In the midst of the haphazard scene growing before them, Izaya and his group being the cause of it quickly got on the elevator in the parking space.

He made eye contact with Sasazaki who was trying to get away from there.

The man in the wheelchair gave a soft smile and waved at Sasazaki.

– Aaaaah! This isn't good, this isn't good, this isn't good!

Sasazaki did not spare time to curse Izaya but instead made a run for the

entrance in haste.

In the middle of doing that he passes the van on the side that Usubara rode in, but he saw a man likely belonging to the Futsuku group in the driver's seat making a call with a pale face.

He was likely making a call for reinforcements.

– Damn! It's over! This is it!

It may have been just pure coincidence. Or it may have been Izaya's calculations.

With the fire extinguishers, did he tell the kids to use them beforehand? Or did the boy and girl use their quick wit independently?

However, everything no longer mattered to Sasazaki.

– I have to run.

He would be chased by the police, but now was not the time to worry on that.

At this place, the trigger for the conflict – it was already readily pulled.

Bunokura Grand Palace, In the Elevator

“Now then.....”

Izaya was sending the information from the micro data card somewhere via a wireless computer. The same time the transmission finished the door opened and a hallway continuing to the gathering entered his vision.

“I sent the last information the person wanted already too....so my job is all done.”

While being pushed by Haruto and Himari, Izaya began talking to Sozoro walking alongside him.

“I can finally rest. I only have to observe everything thoroughly later.”

“.....The destruction of others, you mean?”

At the expressionless Sozoro looking over at him squinting in distaste Izaya shook his head with a snicker.

“Who knows. *The structure of the current town may end*, but you don't know

how people will be. I only gave information everyone wished for.”

“.....”

“Information is the same as a blade. It is up to humans on how they use it.”

Sozoro said to Izaya shrugging his shoulders while still remaining expressionless.

“You may not have noticed, but the blade you speak of is the same as that of a demon blade.”

“What do you mean?”

“Normal humans could not resist. Offer a curse and then saying ‘it is up to how you use it’ is slightly selfish until it blunders. I would be careful to try and not receive a counter hex.”

After Izaya thought for a bit on the elderly man’s warning, and he said with a somewhat desolate smile.

“Isn’t that fine? If that curse is the work of humans even if my heart was pierced by that blade isn’t that blade like love? Well, this is if you did not protect me though.”

Sozoro knew this was not a show of courage or from intoxication but that Izaya was seriously saying it. And so Sozoro as the body guard hired by Izaya returned back without any lies.

“You should try your upmost not to forget. When the contract is finished I will turn into that cursed blade foremost.”

The Former Tunnel

“.....It’s just up ahead.”

Ryuuji Adamura whispered in front of the former tunnel. There was a padlock on the no trespassing signed fenced door, but it was destroyed by someone. If they proceeded further in, there should be a rest space for the workers. It was likely that Kazuhisa and Nana were there.

It was old tunnel reinforced by wooden frames. They probably drove in cars from there. As a tunnel it had been dug in pretty widely with the path

assembled with trolley rails.

Having proceeded down into such a tunnel after ten minutes Ryuaji noticed something off and stopped where he was.

“.....Wait, was there some kind of noise from the direction towards the outside?”

Standing still, he heard a faint sound from the direction of the entrance. It seemed someone was heading towards them.

“.....”

When he looked he saw several lights heading to where he was. While shouting something it ran over.

“What.....?”

He thought it was backup from the Futsuku group, but he was immediately corrected that it was not.

Moving his light in that direction, the other gave a shriek. Hearing that voice, he realized who the person was.

“Douma.....?”

Closing the distance, their faces were illuminated by each other's flashlights. It seemed Douma Kiyojima brought members of the Oukarengou and came here.

“You guys! Why are you here?!”

Ryuaji yelled back at Douma's yell.

“That's what I mean to say!”

“Tch.....So, you guys are really the ones nabbed Nana then!”

“Aah?”

Ryuaji threatened, but the elder Douma undauntedly glared back.

“Don't play dumb! Nana finally sent me a text....said she was eloping, but thanks to her turning on her phone after having it shut off for so long we saw where her whereabouts are....which should be in front of this tunnel here!”

Douma, having found the transmission from around the mine, used the family service search function and walked around with the Oukarengou on the lookout thinking she should be at this mine somewhere.

“So you came to set here quietly to greet us.....What did you guys plan on doing to my sister? Aah?”

“Shuddup.....We just came to finish the trash your whoreish sister tricked. If you like, I can bury you all together?”

“Just you try.....you bastard.”

At this point they did not plan on discussing. In the middle of the tense atmosphere their next number of words decrease.

And then the moment the temperature in the tunnel cooled down –

From the entrance and from the inside of the tunnel there were the sounds of explosions that swept through at the same time.

The Large Banquet Hall

“Now then, continuing on.....The president of the Adamura group, Jingorou Adamura, will give a speech.”

In sync with the chairman’s words, Jingorou Adamura walked onto the platform. His gait was rather strong as though he was not feeling his age affecting him, providing him with the impression of the ruler of the town.

– Hmph, he is completely bluffing.

From the corner of the assembly hall Munenori Kiyojima only gave the form of an applause but gave him a cold stare.

Waiting for his turn after this, he planned on making a speech to hint at the secret of the Adamura tunnel. If he did that, then the people with good intuition in the assembly hall would catch on. Then he could leak out the evidence around the area.

Kiyojima chuckled in his mind imagining the sight of Adamura’s flustered face.

“Now then with the redevelopment operations continuing, I first want to give my thanks. To the residents of this town and to the politicians who brought new

winds to this city.”

— Saying such insincere things.

Since it is his last speech Adamura continues listening while thinking ill of him.

Then at the edge of Kiyojima’s field of vision he saw a black shadow crawl in. When he briefly looked over he saw a man in black clothes sitting in a wheelchair accompanied by an elderly man and two kids in the corner of the party hall.

—?

It's a face I don't know.

Kiyojima thought that.

— A wheelchair?

— No, it can't be.

According to what he heard from his son Douma the man Izaya Orihara was in a wheelchair. The elderly man standing next to him was related to it.

However, why are they here? Without receiving an invitation from someone they should have been able to enter.

Who invited them?

Is that really Izaya Orihara?

While more questions appear in his head one after the other Kiyojima heard the dignified voice of Jingorou Adamura.

“And so, I think I will give an important announcement for you all today.”

———?

What is this important announcement?

Though suspicious and without having the time to imagine the contents, Jingorou Adamura brought up the answer to it.

“The Bunokura mine has shut down today.”

—What?

For a moment, he could not understand what he was saying. It appeared it was the same for every person at the gathering as well, and a commotion began to arise among them at the sudden announcement.

“The cause is the drops in profits continuing on from the dried up resources. It is unfortunate for the history of this town which started as mining town to come to a close, but with the redevelopment process we can take the first step into new history as-”

The speech continued, but it did not reach Kiyojima’s ears.

– What is this?

Kiyojima felt sweat seeping out every pore on his whole body.

– It can’t be. Why? Why at this time!

While watching Kiyojima’s confused face from far away Izaya nodded in satisfaction.

“Wow, such a nice expression. It’s a very human-like expression. It’s amazing.”

“.....You mean as you expected?”

Izaya smiled at Sozoro’s comment and shook his head.

“Not at all! It was beyond what I expected! For it to become like this was completely out of my expectations!”

And then looking at Jingorou Adamura on the platform, he sent honest words of praise.

“He is different from the people who made a fortune in their generation.”

What came to Izaya’s mind was a past memory.

One from just a few days prior – the contents of the phone conversation he had on his cell phone.

A Few Days Ago – Bunokura Grand Palace, the Suite Room

[You’re Izaya Orihara, right.]

Hearing the voice that had suddenly called him, Izaya gave a smirk with a

slight surprise.

“Who are you.....would be impolite to ask. You are the same voice I heard on the TV news or the corporation CM.”

Right there he cut off, and Izaya said after he correcting his posture on his wheelchair and his mindset.

“.....It is a great honor to talk with the *feudal lord* like this.”

For Izaya it was unexpected for the other to call this number. This meant he had more information collecting ability than Izaya. Jingorou supplied the source of the information readily.

[When I re-examined it just in case there were traces of the leaked information on the dried up resources in the mine. When I pressed the person in question and followed the information trail thoroughly this cell phone number came up.]

“Was that first ‘you’re Izaya Orihara, right’ a way to get me to confess?”

[When I looked into the main holder of this number from the back it was someone registered on the black list even in the black market lending companies. I thought it was a cell phone to just be thrown away.]

Izaya shook in delight at Jingorou citing of the details plainly and said in return.

“I see.....So, what do you plan to do to me, who knows the secret of the mine? Will you eliminate me?”

[You already leaked the contents over to Kiyojima right? There is no meaning in having you taken care of now. At first I thought to pull you out, but it seems you are a bigger idiot than I imagined. I decided it would be best to not get involved with you more than necessary.]

“You don’t resent me?”

[Even if I did it’s not like I’m getting any money. It would be useless effort. Although if Ryuji knew he would be that way. Well no, even if he didn’t know he would still try to get rid of you. He’s a coward. Sooner or later wouldn’t he get the impression you are deceiving him?]

After having spoken up until that point, Jingorou paused for a slight period of time before changing the subject.

[This is quite frank, but is this town already coming to an end?]

Izaya cheerfully answered the “feudal lord” – Jingorou Adamura – as he asked that blatantly straightforward.

“Who knows. I think it will depend on everyone’s dedication and efforts.”

[If that’s the case, then at the least the “Adamura and Kiyojima town” will already end. There isn’t anyone with the dedication to continue that balance or anyone who would make the effort in this town.]

“You’re here, though?”

[If I have to clean up all the mess from this situation, there is worth in starting something new instead. I’ll conceal my money and retire. I plan to start up again when the excitement dies down.]

Having stated that ‘his well being is most important,’ Izaya asked Jingorou with a favorable impression towards him.

“Then what? What business does the ‘feudal lord’ abandoning his domain have with me?”

At that, Adamura brought up an issue with an attitude as though asking how the weather would be tomorrow.

[Do you know who killed Ryuichi?]

And Izaya answered with an attitude of telling how the weather would be tomorrow.

“Yes, I know. *I heard from the person who did it.*”

[.....Kazuhisa?]

“Close. I’ll only say that. I would have to receive information corresponding with that value or money for more than that.”

[Is that so? If so, then it’ll just be me soliloquizing then.]

After Jingorou put that out on the table, he began to discuss of his son who died not too long ago in a composed manner.

[Ryuichi had a loan for a lifetime. I think the one who killed him did it in revenge related to that, but.....there's too many I would know. Besides, if they were involved with that they would reasonable want revenge against myself and Kiyojima as well.]

"If you tell me about the *loan*, I would be fine telling you the culprit, you know?"

[.....I can't do that. This isn't about the feelings of the family. Hiding the contents is the loan. Even if I gave a hint saying in straightforwardly would lower my price. Even if it is something already found out. Even I think it is a worthless sense of value though.]

Hearing Jingorou's conversation Izaya nodded in satisfaction.

"No, it is truly a human-like answer. I'm satisfied."

Jingorou then considered Izaya's disposition he had looked into earlier and said sarcastically.

[.....You would say that no matter what I answered with, wouldn't you?]

Present, the Large Banquet Hall

Jingorou Adamura had moved off the platform, spotted Izaya Orihara and approached him.

There were plenty of persons concerned in the operations that tried to talk with him, but he ignored all of them and walked up to him.

"Well, well, thank you for the invitation. And nice to meet you, Jingorou-san."

"I honestly didn't think you would show up. Didn't you think you could have been killed?"

"Just a bit ago they tried to kill me. Not you, but I think it was the pawns of that guy glaring in that corner over there."

Briefly glancing over he saw Kiyojima trembling all over and turning pale and red in the face. Jingorou Adamura said nothing except for a 'is that right?' He then averted his gaze from Kiyojima, uninterested. Having decided to abandon the city, Kiyojima was already a presence he could care less about for him. Rather, he seemed to currently have interest in Izaya and with no concern over

the eye-witnesses present he boldly asked him.

“I can deduce who you are connected with in the underground, what position you have as well as other things. But there is one thing I can’t understand. Who told you to come to this town in the first place? It was not myself or Kiyojima. There should have been someone who gave you the first information as a basis.”

“It is unfortunate, but I cannot tell you my clients and information providers.”

“That right? Then, Kazuhisa is.....”

Seeing Izaya shake his head Jingorou tried to ask about Kazuhisa and Nana. However.

At some point Udagawa entered the assembly hall, ran over to Jingorou and whispered something in his ear. The moment he heard what he said to him Jingorou’s eyes narrowed.

“.....There were explosions at the mine?”

With more to add, Udagawa mentioned another truth.

“The young masters Ryuugi and Kazuhisa as well as some of our own and the Oukarengou were caught in it.”

Izaya had heard of that information, and as he sat in the wheelchair he muttered, “that is more than I expected,” and his eyes shone brightly.

The next moment when he tried to say something there was a cry from the corner of the assembly hall. Everyone including Izaya moved their gazes over there, and there was the face of someone they knew.

Even for Izaya Orihara, even for Jingorou Adamura, and even for Haruto and Himari it was a face they knew well. The moment they saw them the two children individually said.

“.....That’s why I said it though.”

Himari looked at the figure in pity, while Haruto raised his voice as though he remembered who it was.

“Ah! It’s the lady from the park!”

Where Haruto was pointing his finger towards –
was Azami Niiyama pressing a knife to Kiyojima's throat.

Entertainment District

“What the hell!?”

Koshino's eyes widened as he saw the scene. He saw flames rising across town along the clear evening.

Hearing the report from a member under him that 'Sasazaki ran off somewhere in a hurry,' he was doubtful, but then he received a shocking report from another member.

“Around town.....There's fire around town!”

“What!?”

“Furthermore.....there's smoke rising from Adamura-san's estate, Kiyojima's household, the Oukarengou's meetup place, and the work place at the mine!”

“What's going on!?”

Moving out onto the rooftop of the building, he saw the smoke rising from several places around the city. Furthermore he heard the occasional sound of explosions.

While still confused, there was another report from his subordinate.

“The internet is going crazy.... It looks like the fact Bunokura is closing down the mine is being posted unbelievably fast!”

“It's being posted on the town's community network and SNS one after the other.....”

When Koshino took out his smartphone to confirm it in haste he saw the information being posted at a terrific rate.

As though someone was spreading the information on purpose.

“False rumors!?”

“It says it was announced at the gathering, but whether that is true or not is.....”

On top of being a member of the Futsuku group, Koshino whispered as he wiped away the cold sweat.

“Crap.....this town is coming to an end.....”

The Large Banquet Hall

“You’re Azami.”

Jingorou Adamura said to her with an indifferent attitude

“You’re quite calm, master. No, Jingorou Adamura.”

Ignoring the guests running away trying to escape, Azami and Jingorou faced each with only five meters separated from each other.

The surreal scene unfolded in the area while Izaya told Haruto, “how about moving me to a spot for me to see both of their faces more,” in which Haruto replied, “Yes! Izaya-san!” And with a smile he started to push the wheelchair.

Azami moved back to the side of the wall while threatening Kiyojima with the knife and turned her hateful gaze towards Adamura.

Jingorou asked Azami straightforwardly.

“You killed Ryuichi?”

“Yes, that’s right.”

Hardly any clearer Azami confessed to her crime. Her eyes were filled to the brim with anger, but no guilt or repentance could be felt in them.

She briefly looked over at Izaya, who had moved to a spot to see their faces better and gave her thanks.

“Thank you, Izaya-san. Thanks to the information you gave me I was able to break through with a lot of things.”

“I’m glad to hear that.”

“But it’d be better to run from here quickly.”

Azami turned over the bag that was on her shoulder with the hand not holding the knife, and several dynamites fell out from it. They were explosives used in the Bunokura mine. One out of the bunch had a small incendiary device

attached to it.

"Whoa, you brought out something quite dangerous."

Jingorou gave a bitter smile thinking of the naïve security of his company. He thought perhaps there were obscene amounts of complications that came forth to hide the drying up of the mine, but for the meantime there was one thing he clearly understood.

Jingorou spoke up upon seeing the activation switch the woman took out.

"If you set them all off with that amount here, myself, you, and Kiyojima (that trash) would die all together."

"Yes, I know. I don't really care."

With a dark flame burning in her eyes Azami declared.

"If I can take vengeance on *this city* that killed my sister, then the price for my life is cheap."

If it can be called a simple revenge tragedy, then that was what it is.

Azami Niiyama had a younger sister.

Since their parents passed away early on they were taken under separate foster parents. Azami continued to watch over the young girl taken into Bunokura city secretly. Her sister was raised soundly, but one day marked the end of those days.

The distorted body of her sister, who was only sixteen at the time, was discovered. No matter how one looked at it the body could only been seen as a victim of murder. However, the verdict from the police was that it was a suicide.

The police chief of Bunokura concluded it was a suicide and dropped the investigation, completely disregarding that her mouth was stuffed with leaflets and that her throat was cut with a cutter knife thirty times .

It was clearly a suspicious situation, but no one in the city tried to press into the matter. Even her foster parents in the beginning sued the police many times, but having steadily received pressure from those around them they ended up leaving the city.

For the seventeen-year old Azami at the time she was also able to understand it was suspicious. She distributed the posters with her sister's foster parents, but she easily recalled even now how the mood of the town was cemented with the idea to 'not do anything rash.'

What stood in their way of searching for the truth was the *city* itself. Despite that she quietly and secretly continued to look into the case.

Now that ten years had passed, she became aware that the ones who had created the town's atmosphere were the two big authorities: the Adamura household and the Kiyojima household. She knew of the many cases of undetermined deaths from the past in the vicinity of the town, but most of them were treated as suicides or accidents. Since they were dead writers who had looked into the state affairs of the town it was rumored as a tacit understanding it was either Kiyojima or Adamura who eliminated them.

In short, there was the possibility her sister's death also had something to do with the two families.

Azami had thought that and to get close to both families she hid her lineage and did several tasks. As a result she managed to slip in as a maid of the Adamura household and continued to make deeper connections. And there she suddenly came to know.

One day Ryuichi had nearly lost his senses for indulging in dangerous drugs and tried to assault Azami as she was working in the estate. With hollow eyes Ryuichi spoke to her as she attempted to get away.

– “Y-yoooouuu, you want leeaflets shoved in yoour mouth toooo?”

You want leaflets shoved in your mouth too?

The face of her sister appeared in the front of Azami's mind.

The situation of the body was generally not publicized even by the police and was information only the bereaved family knew of. So once she found a *helper* who held a grudge against Ryuji, she decided to try it out.

After having confined him for a few days, she quietly whispered in Ryuichi Adamura's ear. That she was the sister of the girl he killed.

The change was dramatic. Seeing Ryuichi turning pale before her eyes she believed he was the bad guy. Drag out the confession, announce it on the internet and send him to the police – that was the kind of arrangement she made with her ‘helper.’

However at the point she concluded he was the culprit her reasoning suddenly flew from her mind. The cutter knife became a murder weapon instead of a tool to threaten with.

Her ‘helper’ had come afterwards, and at first they trembled in fear but then said, ‘let’s make it look like a suicide.’ They grabbed the knife and threw Ryuichi’s body over from the building.

Ironically that was extraordinarily a very similar scenario with the deformed body of Azami’s sister. Her sister’s death that was concluded as a suicide.

However her feelings did not lighten up.

What is missing? Why is her anger not clearing up?

They were not feelings of guilt. But her revenge did not satisfy her heart.

When she was bearing those heavy feelings – Azami met a strange man called Izaya Orihara. He was an informant surrounded in a mysterious air, boasting he could grasp any weakness of others.

The second time she made contact with the informant was when she was given the cell phone. The informant knew she was looking into the case with Ryuichi Adamura. And that it seemed her *helper* was being suspected instead of her.

She told him what she thought in the end.

[I want to know the weaknesses of the Kiyojima household and Adamura household. If possible, anything related to a case ten years ago.]

In exchange she told him. That she was the culprit behind this case.

She thought it would not matter with this. Rather she thought it would be fine for it to become a big arrest scene for her. Even if she was discovered and beaten to death by the Adamura family, that was why she requested her *helper* to release her testimony to the public.

From the start it was pointless. Without anything progressing she would give herself up and end everything. However, if there was more to it she would realize the continuation of her *revenge*.

The truth was cruel.

What she heard from Izaya was that the case at the time was apparently a case erased by both the Kiyojima and Adamura families.

Ryuichi Adamura was under the influence of drugs and had attacked Douma Kiyojima's sister Nana. Afterwards, Ryuichi was driven away by Douma at the end of their violent brawl, but on his way back he happened to see Azami's sister passing by. He had tried to assault her but received unexpected resistance and thus had killed her.

There were no other marks of violence other than cuts, so that at least was a relief to Azami, but her feelings for revenge for everything against Kiyojima and Adamura – no, all of it was directed to something larger than that.

And then just previously she was sent the data from Izaya on her cell phone.

The last trigger to give herself up to vengeance was on there: the data of the investigation at the time that was supposed to be sealed away and the memos from the police chief at the time and the legwork. It was information she understood with one glance that the case was forced to be kept under lock and key.

She felt she was permitted. That the revenge she would incite was just.

If it could be called a simple revenge tragedy, then that was what it was. And yet, the grudge of the vengeful was deeply rooted and heavy. Enough to be determined to accomplish such a large scale revenge as compensation for her life.

The target of her vengeance was this town itself: the puppet city controlled by the authority of Adamura and Kiyojima.

She would not forgive *any* of the puppets on their strings that discarded her sister.

And now back to the present.

Azami utilized the timing and wireless detonation equipment and blew up places around town especially places with deep connections with Adamura and Kiyojima.

“Right about now I wonder if it is burning all over? Even your children should be crying in the middle of a hole.”

When Azami mentioned this, her eyes conceived of madness, while still having a knife pressed against his throat Kiyojima yelled.

“Wha.....What was that!? What do you mean!?”

“Do you know where Kazuhisa and Nana were hiding? It was the old tunnel of the Bunokura mine.”

“!?”

“So I told him. To that idiot Ryuji. Then I pretended to be Nana on her cell phone and sent that worthless Douma a text.”

And then they were thoroughly pulled in.

“I set explosives at the entrance and inside, so right now they should be buried alive or they are awaiting suffocation for the airspace made between the rubble to dissipate, perhaps? Yes, if Kazuhisa and Nana-chan were in there then they are surely buried alive.”

“Y-you biiiitch!Hee!?”

Kiyojima raged, but having the knife pressed against the base of his neck he withdrew his anger readily.

Jingorou on the other hand focused on Azami and asked expressionlessly.

“How do you know Ryuji and everyone all entered?”

“Eh?”

“According to Udagawa’s report the explosion that happened in the tunnel was only fifteen minutes ago. But it is impossible for you to have arrived here from the former tunnel in fifteen minutes, and I don’t think you have any devices hooked up to the internet set up to avoid the public notice. There is someone helping you right? Who is it?”

“.....It doesn’t matter right. After all, you and I are also going to die.”

Hearing those words Kiyojima cried out.

“I-I have nothing to do with this! The one who killed your sister was Ryuichi Adamura right!? Then why me, Douma, and even Nana.....”

The one who answered Kiyojima was not Azami.

“Yes, but that’s simple.”

Izaya playing around and stabbing the fruit on the table with a knife while sitting in his wheelchair slipped the ‘information’ over to Kiyojima cheerfully.

“The cause of the girl’s murder. If the event that he attacked Kiyojima’s daughter and the retaliation of getting hit back by Kiyojima’s son was made public it would have been a major scandal to your household, right? All the crimes Douma-san did may also have went public. And so you erased the event even more thoroughly than usual. I am unsure whether the chief at the time took consideration of that or you applied pressure though?”

“I-I- I don’t know!”

“Even if you didn’t know the result was the same, right? The only person who created the corruption to erase the events was you, so, well, isn’t that when I say you reaped what you sowed? I also was almost taken by people similar to the members of your pet organization just previously.”

“.....”

Azami was taken aback for a moment and had her mouth opened soundlessly in shock by Izaya explaining everything on her behalf.

She had the plan to end all of her vengeance here. What Azami Niiyama had miscalculated was that there was a person with more of a loose screw in his head than her who was captured by her own maddening desire for revenge in the area.

“.....You won’t run?”

“That’s right, at this distance I’ll also be dragged into it and die. Haruto-kun, Himari-chan, you can leave the room. Sozoro-san can stay.”

“Oka~y.” “.....”

The children rushed out in a hurry at Izaya’s words. It could be because the explosions were still going off in the city, but the police had not arrived yet. Security personnel were watching at a distance, but with explosives fallen at Azami’s feet they could not carelessly approach.

Azami on the other hand not understanding the purpose of Izaya staying was at a loss. Perhaps he took that as hesitation, but Kiyojima desperately yelled while the knife was still pressed against his throat.

“Th-think about it! Would your sister be happy with you doing this? Taking revenge and having unrelated people dragged into it; your sister wouldn’t be happy about it, right?”

Kiyojima used philosophical words to set her on the right path, but the knife pierced his shoulder once.

“Gwaaa!”

Izaya stated to Kiyojima as he cried out in a carefree manner.

“I think even if the assailant says that it would just have the opposite effect, right?”

“.....That’s right. Do you think you could stop me now with those words? My sister’s feelings no longer matter. This is revenge to clear not my sister’s grudge but mine away. It doesn’t matter who resents me!”

Azami declared, yet Izaya said to her with an aloof attitude.

“At least only I, however, respect you, Azami-san.”

It was not like he was not reading the situation. He read it and said that in a manner as though he would dare to overlook it.

“.....Eh?”

“It is not easy to do, you know? Sacrificing your own dead sister and carry out your revenge.”

“.....”

Not understanding what Izaya was saying Azami’s face fell daunted

unknowingly.

Ignoring her expression Izaya started weaving his words as though partially excited while playing with the knife in his wheelchair.

"At this point, your sister.....Hmm, it was Kasumi-chan, right? She would just receive the title of "the sister of a terrorist that destroyed the town." If the truth about Kasumi-chan was officially announced it would have been settled with her being the pitiful victim killed by the son of an influential person let alone treated as a victim of suicide, but now she is the *main cause* of triggering an act of terror."

"The main cause.....!"

"How many people will read into the newspaper articles of the inner workings and make judgements? The people of this town that just had casualties may think this. 'If that Kasumi girl just shut up and submitted her body to Ryuichi she wouldn't have been killed. Now on top of suffering the consequences and getting killed we got dragged into that revenge. Such trouble.' they would say. Depending on the circumstances the kids who were not victims or anything would see the news on the net while eating their snack and write up vulgar comments like "wasn't this sister behaving in a way to lure men?" in the news comment column. Of course there are guys who would say that even if they announce it normally, but regardless for involving unrelated people into it she is the sister of a terrorist. Even though they did not do anything they were used as a toy. Thanks to you."

"....."

Azami turned pale, but Izaya continued further.

"And then you are going to try to blow yourself up and die. If you do so, then the future will take care of itself. You can escape without having to take responsibility for your sister's reputation. It's amazing. To be able to disgrace your sister for revenge! I honestly didn't think you would do it here. At best I thought you would stab Jingorou Adamura-san from the back and end it there. Thank you! Really, thank you! Since there are people like you around, I can believe in the infinite potential of humans! I can praise humans for how amazing they are from my heart! I can love humans!"

“Stop already!”

Azami screams.

“What’s the point of this! Do you want to die here!? What do you want to do!”

At that Izaya answered honestly.

“I want to see it.”

“.....Eh?”

“Your end. Would you prioritize my heartless words or Adamura-san and press the switch? Or would you surpass my expectations and find another answer? The moment you press the switch would you die with a satisfied expression or would you try to die vigorously? I just want to know those kind of trivial things.”

Interest.

Something that could be expressed as twisted love; just, just simple interest and curiosity. There was nothing else in Izaya Orihara’s eyes than that.

“You pulled off more than what I expected. And so I want to know more. About the humans I don’t know.”

Without fear towards death or calculations of how to persuade her, he really was just making an expression that only showed him as though wondering to himself, ‘how will Azami move, or what expression will she make?’

Cold dread rushed through Azami’s whole body.

And she was convinced.

That this man –

That the man Izaya Orihara truly did think he would not mind dying here.

She could not think he was anything but crazy.

The person Izaya himself was frightening, but more than that it was terrifying how he reflected on her position. Even her sister’s death was made into a part of a show.

A staggering unpleasant feeling shot through her entire body. The existence that was Izaya appeared to be that of a demon.

Would dying here, even if she brought Izaya with, not be playing right into his hand until the end?

There was a cold sweat forming all over her body; she could feel death was near.

- What am I doing?
- My life does not exist to entertain this crazed person.
- Kasumi didn't die for this kind of person.....

With anger and fear mixing in, Azami stared at Izaya while trembling all over. And so she did not notice – the massive shadow that was roughly more than two meters tall sneaking up silently behind her.

“.....Eh?”

By the time she noticed Azami's body was lifted up into the air. The hand that held the detonation switch was grabbed by a large palm and was then lifted up. He did not do just that. There was an unpleasant snapping sound, and then her arm was easily broken.

“Aaaah.....Gah.....!”

The detonation switch fell from her hand from the impact and dropped to the floor.

The large shadow Usubara, not realizing the dynamite fallen at his feet, looked around the inside of the room while breathing heavily. And then he spot him: the person in the photo he was shown from Ryuji and was told, 'when there is a dispute get rid of him.' He saw the face of a black haired man.

The same face of the man who just previously incited a gang on him.

“.....”

Usubara just as wordlessly threw Azami's body like throwing out trash. She was knocked into the wall and then stopped moving.

“Wh-whoa, nice! Thanks to you I'm sa-.....”

Kiyojima tried to express his gratitude while wiping off his cold sweat, but he could not say those words to the end.

Usubara flung his arm back, finding him to be a hindrance. The back of his fist directly hit Kiyojima's face.

"Whagh"

Kiyojima's body tumbled for several meters, collided into a wall and fell still.

"Hey, Usubara....."

Jingorou called out to him, but Usubara just glared at Izaya without any reaction.

"It's no good. He can't hear me. He's completely lost it. When he gets like that even I can't stop him."

Izaya Orihara on the other hand, after making a blank expression like a child for a moment, shook his head in disappointment.

"Aah.....I didn't get to see her decision in the end. Well, this is also life."

And then seeing Usubara slowly walk towards him, Izaya gave an affectionate smile.

"But I'll forgive it. Even picky types like you appearing is another interesting part of humans."

Usubara did not listen to Izaya's words and lifted up a table in his reach. He then swung it downwards with great force, but just before he could the table was stopped.

What Jingorou saw was the form of the elderly man, who was standing by as a bystander until then. He had slipped behind Usubara at some point and grabbed hold of his shoulders and elbows with both hands while stepping on the top of his foot.

Regardless of how exactly he was able to do it, the man who was proud of his strength was unable to throw down the table with just that. During that time Izaya pressed the electric switch on his wheelchair and backed away at a fairly fast speed more than what a regular electronic wheelchair could do.

“.....”

Usubara let both hands go from the table. The table dropped to the floor with a loud bang. Usubara then swung back his open hand in an attempt to grab hold of Sozoro.

However Sozoro, a moment faster than him, moved out of the way and sprung up by using the other's knees as a stool, striking Usubara's chin with his knee in the process. Having his head turn upward from the impact, Sozoro then struck down with his elbows right at the space between his nose and mouth.

“.....!”

His posture crumbled, but he did not fall and from the spaces in the bandages he glared down at Sozoro.

“Hmph.....You are quite sturdy. If it had been me I would have fainted, but it is enviable to be young.”

In front of Usubara with unusual stamina the mysterious elderly man settles with calling that “young.”

Jingorou watched with surprised eyes and recalled the proper noun “Densuke Sozoro” from Candiru's report.

– Sozoro..... Densuke Sozoro?

– Densuke Sozoro.... It can't be!? The Densuke the Lion.....!?

Jingorou's eyes widened, and he withdrew the legend of the “lion” Densuke Sozoro from a memory thirty years ago.

About thirty years ago, he was the strongest fighting instructor in the Kantou region who taught fundamentals of martial arts to the now world martial arts champion Traugott Geisendorfer.

He is a man rumored to respect both humanity and justice while being a fighting instructor who exercises his talents for the people on the street or for an obligation of honor.

Although his way of fighting is so dirty it is too far from it being called justice; he would not carry them normally, but if they are there he will use anything whether it be a Japanese sword, a gun, or just a regular stone or sand. To return

the favor to a ramen shop that gave him free boiled eggs he fought against a gang, and as a result has crushed a group made up of thirty people by himself.

Jingorou thought half of it was fake, but the elderly man in front of him was certainly skillful to a terrifying extent.

After Usubara cracked his neck, he swiped his hand towards the elderly man. As he did so he grabbed the table, picked it up with just the power of his fingers and threw it at the old man.

Tableware and forks on the table fell into the air and the huge mass of the table were all drawing near the old man, but that elderly man slipped under the table and grabbed hold of and pulled the tablecloth at the same time.

The old man who passed under the table that was thrown at him rushed right up to Usubara, leaped up and covered the table cloth over his face.

“.....!”

Usubara, whose sight was taken from him for a moment, reached a hand to his face to tear off the cloth. However as though he read it the elderly man turned his body full circle he fixed the table cloth around his neck while wrapping his opponent's arms. He then grabbed the end of the cloth, dropped down beside his back and tightened the other's throat with his own weight. If he was normal one would think that would be the end of it, but he seemed to not just have half-hearted superhuman strength. And with just the strength to tear off his hand from his face he tore the durable cloth like straw paper.

“Hmph. If you use the best of that explosive strength you could have aimed for an Olympic medal. It is a regrettable break from that path.”

Just what end will this grand battle meet?

Just as the eye-witnesses were holding their breath and watching attentively, there was a voice coming from the area where Azami stood just previously.

“A~h, seriously, Sozoro-san, getting all heated up. This is the stupid type of boy. You would win easily if you don't fight upfront and carried a marking pin dipped in poison or something instead.”

Seeing several of Sozoro's striking and fine movements Izaya concluded them

as having 'an upfront fight.'

Turning his gaze over to him in interest, Jingorou inquired.

"How did you get that old man? He doesn't look like a person who would become a pawn of evil for someone like you."

"Yes, Sozoro-san? That person was in prison for years under a false accusation. During that time the shop his daughter and her husband owned was targeted for eviction and even his grandchild was targeted. I just freely proved Sozoro-san's false accusation in good timing at such a time and gave protection for his daughter, her husband, and grandchild."

Chuckling, Izaya continued.

"Well, when he met me he said he could see my true nature but ignored that and requested for my assistance anyway. I didn't need thanks, so I have him be my bodyguard for ten years."

"Ten years....that's quite long."

"It's because he was put in prison under the false charge for ten years. I even found the real culprit who pushed that accusation on him and had him arrested, and since he is not restricted the entire year I don't think it's that high of a request?"

Jingorou gave a bitter smile towards Izaya who had phrased it that way so smoothly and said.

"Kid, what do you plan on dragging out such an old relic for?"

".....Nothing really? I lost to a guy who was the culmination of strength in the past, so I just wanted to make certain of it. What unreasonable force the culmination of technique and skill be able to win against.Well I don't know whether there would be the occasion to test that, but..... I also may have wanted to simply learn it. The culmination of human's skills."

"Oh?"

"I don't have strength or skill. I really don't like fighting upfront."

Then removing his gaze from Sozoro's fierce fight unfolding Izaya approached the fallen Azami by the wall.

And then he picks up some kind of switch that had fallen beside her.

“I can’t fight any other way than this.”

When he looked what was in Izaya’s other hand was one of the dynamites scattered on the floor – one with a detonation device attached to it. Izaya took what he picked up, placed the detonation switch on his knees and tossed the dynamite high into the air.

Just around the moment when the dynamite nearly touched the ceiling Izaya hurled up a throwing knife he took out from somewhere. With unbelievable speed for it to have been thrown while sitting in a wheelchair. With a method of throwing considered to have been cultivated from independent discipline to move the upper working muscles to its maximum efficiency. The knife that was thrown at an extraordinary force pierced the dynamite and then thrust into the ceiling.

The next moment Izaya picked up the switch he left on his knees and pressed it without hesitation. And then the dynamite pinned to the ceiling exploded. Rubble poured down from the ceiling in mass in the vicinity where Sozoro and Usubara were fighting.

“.....”

Jingorou stared at Izaya behaving bluntly with eyes half open, but Izaya just grinned and shrugged his shoulders on his wheelchair.

“Urghh.....”

At that, perhaps the effect of the explosion, but Azami regained consciousness and opened her eyes in a daze.

“Hey, you awake? How do you feel of your second thoughts right until the end?”

Azami gave a hollow gaze for a while, but then those eyes steadily started to have awareness return to them and she looked over at Izaya with a complex expression mixed with various emotions.

“.....I may feel better if I didn’t wake up and just died.”

“There may be a day you will be glad that you lived. People are not prophets.

Since you see the results, it's fine to give up or oppose it. For your sister who already cannot do that."

".....!Whatever. Honestly, I realized from your words before. I can't remember Kasumi's face.In the end, that's good proof I acted that way for my own sake."

"Isn't that fine? Forgetting is a lovable system (spirit) born for humans to move forward."

"You.....what is your aim? To make me angry? Or do you want to press for an introspection?"

Azami questioned him as she slowly rose up while bearing her anger and disturbance. Izaya answered her honestly.

"It's rehabilitation (human observation). I wanted to know more of you all (humans). That's it."

Izaya only stated that in answer. He then moved his wheelchair and headed towards the exit.

Jingorou saw that and frowned.

"Ah, hey. You running?"

"See you then, Azami-san, Jingorou-san! You all were fairly fun people! If we can let's meet again! When I have time I'll give you a call!"

While saying that he raised his hand and left. The security personnel attempted to stop him, but realizing his hand was grasping another dynamite they gave a cry and moved away.

From behind Jingorou in a daze he heard the voice of an elderly man.

".....Excuse me. I am terribly sorry to trouble you after concluding hushing up events to be evil, but please do not inform the police about us."

After bowing and lowering his head quickly, Sozoro, completely unscratched other than just covered in dust, ran down towards the hallway. He pursued the man running away in a wheelchair with a speed beyond the average person as though to hunting him down to eliminate him.

Left behind, after laying there befuddled for a few moments Azami noticed Jingorou's presence and while glaring at him spoke to him.

".....Jingorou.....If you.....if you didn't cover up your son's (that trash's) case for your love for him.....!"

"Make no mistake. I didn't cover it up for the love towards my son. The police chief at that time read too much into things, and I just pressed my son for it as a loan. Of course Ryuichi instructed to erase it from me, and it's true I hid the crime. You have the legitimate right to hate me."

Jingorou made a large sigh and asked Azami, glaring at him.

"How about it? Will you give me a repayment? There are dynamites and forks scattered all over the floor?"

".....I don't have that capability anymore once I couldn't press the switch. But I won't forgive you, Kiyojima, or this town for the rest of my life, and I'll continue to hate you all. If I get out of prison, I'll have you suffer in another way. In any way."

"That's about right. I can't say I'm looking forward to it. However I'll say if you are going to do something give it a try. At that time if I comeback I'll hire you as a maid again."

".....Stop being a big shot. You'll fall after this, *feudal lord*."

After seeing Azami being carried away by security while still glaring at him, Jingorou smiled slightly.

"Even so....."

Shaking his head while still giving a bitter smile Jingorou repainted his value towards the man *Izaya Orihara*.

"He may have been more than I expected, or a big idiot of an unequaled level....."

When Izaya reached the entrance of the hotel there was one car parked.

"Hey, I made you wait, didn't I! We'll head out soon. Before Sozoro-san gets angry and comes chasing after us."

Izaya called out to them with a gentle smile as he looked at Haruto and the several silhouettes in front of the car. However the one who answered was not any of the people in front of the car, but the voice of the older man who caught up to his side soundlessly.

“The one we’re waiting on is you, Izaya-dono.”

“.....”

Izaya observed various distinctions from his expressionless features and slumped his shoulders in disappointment.

“No way, Sozoro-san. Are you perhaps angry? I believed you would come out unscratched from that, so that’s why I did it.”

“Likewise. I also have faith in you, Izaya-dono.That you would not receive a concussion even if your brain was rattled thirty times.”

Immediately after, Izaya received thirty minor blows in succession on his temple and jaw. But whether Izaya was able to bear that many hits is engraved in the world as information the person himself only knew.

Interlude: The Man Called Izaya Orihara ⑤

‘the hell, you came back again? I said I don’t have anything to say about that flea!

.....I have no choice, huh. It’d be unreasonable to refuse after asking like that.

However, I don’t have much to say about him.

What I know is that flea is a useless bastard, but... Among fleas, there is only one thing I recognize.

That ‘attachment’ of his.....When there is one thing he has an eye on, it’s honestly ominous how focused he’ll become on it to where even your own life is irrelevant.

If there is any ‘fear’ towards him it would be that one point. So, watch out. First, his own life is secondary to him. Anytime I thought “with this he’ll lay off,” he’ll take another step forward and come at me again. What is dangerous is

that habit of his where he gets away craftily unscratched.....Damn, just remembering it pisses me off.

.....Anyway, if you're going to make an opponent of that flea, don't think of him as a human. It's better to think of him as a zombie or something.

He probably mistakes himself of being human. There's no reason to treat him as a human. In many meanings.

Even so..... That bastard Izaya. He's alive, huh.

Is that so..... Nah, it's nothing. Anyway, you shouldn't get involved with him.

If you asked everyone else, they've said it right? To not get involved with him. If you meet him, tell him this.

'Don't come back to Ikebukuro again, I~za~ya~-kun.'

-Extracted from a testimony of man H, rumored to be Izaya Orihara's natural enemy

エピローグ

折原臨也と、
夕焼けを



Epilogue: A Sunset with Izaya Orihara

So? What happened in the end?

[Not much really. The town didn't become vacant, but at the least the "Adamura and Kiyojima's divided rule" that kept the balance of Bunokura completely crumbled. At any rate, Ryuji Adamura and Douma Kiyojima do not give the order to close the mine down. The Futsuku group and the Oukarengou mistook the bombs as an attack against each other and had a big dispute. Even the riot police were dispatched to round them up over three days.]

Hmmm. What stupid gangs, huh.

[Incidentally, I guess this means the mining town Bunokura has come to an end. Unfortunately, it seems the talk on the airport and redevelopment may become a blank sheet.]

How terrible. That's a hard blow for us. I wonder how many people will hang themselves. Did they take responsibility and die?

[That's terrible to say. I just gave the information that they wanted, you know? As a result, the town is no more. No matter the path taken that town was already at its limit, so even if I didn't go Ryuji Adamura and Douma Kiyojima would have worn it out and led it to a tragic event in about ten years.]

It was news even over here. One woman had retaliated for her sister's revenge by a tyrant, but half of it seems to have become an impressive tale. So, what happened to that Azami kid? Since you harassed her, maybe she was pessimistic and committed suicide?

[There's a rumor she fell like an evil spirit. Well, with that chance all the wicked acts Ryuichi Adamura and Douma Kiyojima did were made public. Even the police chief at the time was dealt with. Seriously, you don't know what will happen in life. However, since Azami-san interests me, I think I should disguise myself and attend the hearing.]

You really don't have any restraint.

By the way, how are those idiot kids?

[It seems they were saved in the tunnel just before they suffocated. Although

thinking of what is happening now you may say they would be better off dead.]

I don't want to be told that by you.

Better off dead....that's what everyone would want to be in the position to say, right? For you.

[Could you be less frank about it? It's been a while after all.]

.....Yes, it's been a while. Even so, you really lived.

[I was close to dying though.]

Didn't you tarnish your later years?

I wonder if it means you're ignorant enough to not know the saying "there's always something good among the bad?"

Well, it has nothing to do with me. See you.

Hagane City A Park along the Coast

After confirming the other cut the call Izaya showed it while shrugging his shoulders.

"Seriously, Namie-san is strict as always. Even though I told her the information since Nebura was involved in Bunokura's redevelopment plans."

"It is something she chooses."

A coastal city neighboring Bunokura city. Beside Izaya shrugging his shoulders on the wheelchair a man stood.

"That's true. At that point I am fortunate to be acquainted with an elite character of the police force."

"Although with this case it damaged my career."

That was the police chief of Bunokura city-Kakinuma.

If Sasazaki or Kiyojima who know him sees him they would frown their eyes saying "who are you?" at the transfiguration.

Without the behavior to flatter others the gleam of his eyes within the glasses were sharp like a hawk's. They emit an aristocratic atmosphere fitting for a poor elite.

“You sure threw things into a confusion more than I expected. Not just squeezing out the pus that are Adamura and Kiyojima, but even destroying the city itself.”

“I said it right? It wasn’t for your sake, but I’d move for mine.Well, it was also beyond from what I expected. Normally I don’t think trying to throw everyone into confusion with human relations would end up in a terror bombing attack.”

Kakinuma said to Izaya shrugging his shoulders with a mix of a sigh.

“Well, it’s fine. A supervisor I’m acquainted with will move in regards to the previous police chief. From there we will squeeze out the issue..... It is one relief for not even one dead person to come out of the bombing. Including what you have done too.”

“What happened to that huge guy?”

“According to reports, he pushed aside the rubble and ran away. He seemed to have screamed ‘Izaya Oriharaaa’ like a monster would.”

“I’m not that good with those types who use brute strength.”

After making a slightly unpleasant face Izaya asked something he was interested in.

“Actually, what happened to Jingorou-san?”

“Unlike Kiyojima who was overthrown he clearly crushed the evidence of the cover up. It’s possible to question the crime, but it’s more difficult to imprison him. Although he seems to plan to set his assets with the group and draw back somewhere.....We can’t expose everything in his hands.”

“Is that so? Even with your abilities you can’t do it? Even you who utterly picked on me at the Ikebukuro office?”

“.....Now is the time decide what to let out and what to hide.”

Kakinuma gave a bitter smile at Izaya’s sarcastic words.

“The sun is no longer in that city. It has gone down. It’s already gone down. Izaya.”

“You were the one who wished for that.”

“Yeah, if that rotten sun shone, then protecting justice in the dark night is our job.”

Kakinuma snorted and let out a grumble with a pretty loose expression.

“Anyway, is it because of the search for Sasazaki who ran? Really, he did some excessive things.”

And then looking at the few cars behind Izaya’s back and the group of people standing in the area Kakinuma gave a nasty smile.

“That’s right.Finding the missing person from explosions at the coal mine will take a little more time. You should send them somewhere far away at once.”

After the police chief left who obtained a half day of rest in ten days after being chased by the riots of Bunokura City-Izaya slowly moved the wheelchair manually and approached each person around the car.

And then he called out to one person among them.

The missing person involved in the cave-in at the old tunnel, Kazuhisa Adamura.

“Hey, how do you feel, missing person currently unknown to be dead or alive.”

“Izaya-san....”

He slid a hand on the frightened Kazuhisa’s shoulder, drew near his face and whispered so no one could hear.

“Show me, Kazuhisa-kun. How you will live from this point on while bearing guilt towards that pure Nana-chan.”

“.....Azami-san really didn’t say anything about me.....?”

“That’s right, Kazuhisa-kun. There was no *accomplice*. It seems she insists it was revenge she accomplished on her own.”

Kazuhisa Adamura was an accomplice. Izaya put it together from hearing the police information from Kakinuma and Sasazaki and those around picked on by

Ryuichi and asked him a leading question.

As a result, he was recognized instantly, but it seemed Azami suggested to him, 'you and Nana-chan will be buried alive in the tunnel. Change your names and live a new life.'

Izaya was thinking, 'she went beyond my expectations again,' when Nana came over and said.

"Um....Are you really going to give use new names?"

"Of course. I promised right? In exchange for information I would help you two elope."

"But.....perhaps you might end up being treated as a kidnapper and get arrested....."

After Izaya gaped in surprise for a moment at Nana saying something offset and worrying he answered her while chuckling.

"It's fine Nana-chan. Humans are more important to me than the laws humans decided on."

It was a motive with no lies. However, just exactly how she took it favorably, Nana said to Haruto with eyes sparkling.

"Izaya-san is really a good person, isn't he!"

"That's right! Izaya-san is a really nice person!"

Hearing Nana and Haruto having such a conversation, everyone else whispered in their hearts that 'there's no way that is true.'

".....If I was that much of an idiot, would I be happy too?"

Sozoro shakes his head a little at Himari's subdued mummer.

"Happiness is to each their own. We can find our own sooner or later. If I could strangle Izaya-dono to death, maybe then that will be my happiness."

".....I'll kill him too."

Whether he overheard that conversation, Izaya inquires as he wipes the cold sweat from his cheeks.

“Aren’t you talking of some terrible stuff? Sozoro-san, are you perhaps still blaming me for getting you wrapped up in the destruction of the ceiling?”

“By no means. Whether I blame you or not for such a trifling thing, it does not change the fact I think you would be better off dead.”

“.....Is that so. If that’s the case it’s fine I guess.”

Not understanding himself what was fine, Izaya moved his wheelchair forward heading towards the automobile, and two faces appeared from inside the car.

“My, employing that boy and lady for a while, are you sane?”

“I like them. Nana-chan was it? That sheltered girl!”

The two were a man with swept back hair and sunglasses and a bespectacled gothic girl.

“Now don’t say that, *Isozaka-san*. Still, I saw the data, but to even report on my sisters’ measurements – isn’t that going too far?”

“It is a principle we do not omit, but in the first place we got hard to work in this area thanks to you. For the next position please properly introduce us to it, President Orihara.”

“Since I became president different from through registration, can you at least call me the shadow director?”

“Useless president is fine!”

“I won’t increase wages to a kid who says that, Inari zu-...gah”

Izaya, who received a jab to the throat from the suddenly serious Nec, coughed violently for a while.

“Now then...let’s leave the chit-chat here and get going soon.....Huh?”

When he looked up while he was catching his breath, a certain spectacle caught in Izaya’s eyes scorched.

“Hey, look. Bunokura city is dyed in the sunset.”

It was a splendid crimson color and was seen as though it is falling down in flames within the sun.

"Honestly I thought that city would cease to be someday, but for only one person to run wild and destroy the city is something I can't do. Azami-san's abilities in conduct are really worthy of respect."

Recalling the figure not in this place right now, while turning his maximum respect and good will towards her Izaya quietly continued to watch the city burning in the sunset.

Lining up together, the people who know Izaya's true nature well think: he surely would say the darkness of the night and the coming of the day were equally beautiful. While understanding that they stood beside Izaya and continued gazing at Bunokura city illuminated by the sunset and the final curtain on the Adamura paradise.

They knew.

That if they continued working with Izaya Orihara together the ones who would be scorched by the sunset someday will be them.

On top of knowing that, right now it is just-a sunset with Izaya Orihara.

While hopefully believing the falling sun could connect to the coming day of tomorrow. All of them while thinking that continued to watch the sinking sun. While believing it was a scenery they would not be able to see unless they walked with Izaya.

Fin

Afterword

For those being a first time, nice to meet you. For those that have been around a while, it's been a while. It's Ryohgo Narita.

And so thank you for reading "A Sunset with Izaya Orihara!"

Although the name is in the title, this story is not necessarily an adventure ballad about a man Izaya Orihara overcoming hardships and growing. I hope you think of it as a story like that of a kind of calamity panic movie (disaster movie) where a city that maintained its form while also on the edge crumbles by a foreign person named "Izaya Orihara" getting into the mix.

And so this work is a spin-off of my own work called *Durarara!!* which is set in Ikebukuro.

He is one of the main characters in that work, and Izaya Orihara was someone who secretly maneuvered events as an intentional troublemaker, stirring up the city. This work is drawn up on what he is doing somewhere after the last volume of the original.

For those who do not know *Dura* I hope you think of it as "I don't really know, but it's a story of a city being trifled with by a man with abnormal information collecting abilities." For those who know *Dura*, I hope you enjoy it as "a spin-off on the man Izaya who was released from the constraints called Ikebukuro."

Yes, constraints.

Personally as the author it is easy to let my pen run extraordinarily when it comes to writing the character that is Izaya Orihara, and even now among the characters that I have written he is one of characters really well liked. Whether it be a character walking alone or talking to himself, he is also a character where his lines come up one after the other. However in the work *Durarara!!* this character Izaya Orihara could not completely move freely. Just as you know for those who have read *Dura* there is always an "enemy" that would come to interfere, and as such there is an existence as "shackles" to force him to act with consciousness for Izaya to release himself.

And so this is a series where Izaya is released from “elsewhere that is named home ground” and does as he would like in an unknown land. I hope you enjoy the concept of “what would happen if there was no one to stop Izaya’s hobbies?”

At first the work was written thinking it was going to be published from Media Works, but having received opinions from the editorial department in the middle it has instead been published by Dengeki Bunko.

As a label there is not any particular rules, but personally as according to the image I bear I think if it was from Media Works Candiru and Usubara would not appear, the true culprit who killed Ryuichi and the accomplice would take up half the book while Izaya would viscously run them up the wall with his crafty words, reveal their pasts, and then it would become a development where it all breaks down.

If it was planned for Dengeki Bunko from the beginning, I think it would have been gaudy considered stories like “Having gotten pulled into a hijacking incident, in the plane there are a series of killings occurring! A killer even the hijackers fear of is on this plane.....!?” “Izaya Orihara vs. A Bomber! A closed off village trying to exclude outsiders finally becomes a vacant land!” “A fake Izaya Orihara Appears! A legend of a doppelganger being circulated in a famous sightseeing area!”, so I think that this book has become like that sort of midway.

Next time if a story of an “informant” getting pulled into a showy event like what I said just now, and the culprits and the victims are at the whim of an “informant”it may become such a composition story, so once a continuation comes out I hope you would enjoy this “Izaya Orihara to.....” series.....!

Now then, I think everyone who has just seen Izaya for the first time in this work would say “Hey, this composed informant – even though he’s a terrible person he didn’t get hardly any consequences! What about some karma?!” –

For everyone thinking that I recommend the origin of the spin-off the Durarara!! series! Fundamentally the character Izaya Orihara has the same personality like in the original work.....Well, he was a more troubling man with a bit of ill intent rather than neutrality, so he gets bad consequences at times, and many characters who can be called a “barrier” to stop him, so I think you

can enjoy the character Izaya Orihara with him a bit different in the original work!

And now, this July the third of the anime series Durarara!! x2 Ten will begin airing! It is not just the anime, but starting from the manga release of the Durarara!! RE Dollars Saga comic there will be various other Media Works developments, so with those additions I hope you enjoy other sides of Izaya Orihara with this opportunity!

At last this will be appreciations.

Starting from Papio-san (Wada-san) in charge of having to work with my very, very tight schedule to everyone in the AMW printing division proofreading, thank you so much.....!

To everyone who has made various medium Media Works products in relation to the basis of the spin-off Durarara!!.

To my family always supporting me, my friends, and illustrators lined up with authors.

To Suzuhito Yasuda-san having drawn wonderful illustrations for the Izaya spin-off while working vigorously on various other works.

And more than anything, to everyone who has picked up the book that is a new series as well as the spin-off of the story Durarara!!.

Thank you very much! I look forward to more hereafter!

“While watching the ‘Kowasugi!’ (Too Scary) series.” June 2015. Ryohgo Narita.